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CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. GENERAL OUTLINE OF PRESENT RELIGIOUS TENDENCIES	1
II. THE IDEA OF GOD IN ALL RELIGIONS: ONE SUPREME BEING AND MANY SUBORDINATE DIVINITIES	25
III. CELESTIAL HIERARCHIES AND THE SPIRITUAL ASPECT OF ASTROLOGY	48
IV. NATURAL AND REVEALED RELIGION: GOD IN NATURE AND IN GRACE	73
V. RELIGION AS A SOCIAL FORCE	96
VI. RELIGION AND PEACE: RELIGION AS A PEACE-MAKER	112
VII. ONE RELIGION AND DIVERS RELIGIOUS SYSTEMS AS SUGGESTED BY THE RAINBOW	128
VIII. THE IDEA OF SPIRIT-COMMUNION IN THE RELIGION OF TO-MORROW	154
IX. THE LAW OF SPIRITUAL INFUX: ITS INFLUENCE ON RELIGIOUS SYSTEMS AND ALL ORGANIZATIONS AT LARGE	174
X. LOVE AND FEAR, LIBERTY AND LAW IN THE RELIGION OF TO-MORROW	198
XI. REINCARNATION AND KARMA	230
XII. THEOSOPHY, CHRISTIAN SCIENCE, AND OTHER MODERN CULTS: THEIR RELATION TO THE RELIGION OF TO-MORROW	255
XIII. PROPHETIC RELIGION AND CIVIC RIGHTEOUSNESS	278
XIV. THE RELIGION OF TO-MORROW—A GENERAL PROPHETIC FORECAST	295

THE RELIGION OF TO-MORROW

CHAPTER I

GENERAL OUTLINE OF PRESENT RELIGIOUS TENDENCIES

IN attempting to predict what may possibly, or indeed probably, be the coming religion of the human race, or of any considerable section of it, it is surely essential at the very outset to review, to some extent, the sources whence various religious ideas and systems at present widespread have derived their origin and continuous support. There are two diametrically opposite theories extant concerning the origin of all religion worthy of the name. One school of theologians claims a supernatural origin for religion, a direct divine revelation, without which, this school claims, humanity would not have been able to conceive the idea of Deity or to

B

2 THE RELIGION OF TO-MORROW

think of the human soul as immortal ; the other school insists that religious impulses are inborn and, therefore, no direct or extraneous revelation can be needed to evolve religious concepts.

Probably a very large percentage of modern theologians occupy middle ground between these definitely opposing views, and as theology at present is to a large extent in a very uncertain state, it would be a futile task to attempt to say just where popular theology to-day is standing in any part of the world ; for wherever indifference to religion is not evident, controversy is rife and contending parties are struggling either to effect the triumph of sacerdotalism or else to dethrone it utterly.

Were we all on precisely the same intellectual and moral level our requirements would be identical and we should all be satisfied with the same sort of religion, or else with none at all ; but so diverse are our conditions and our demands that it is proving ever more and more impossible to bring about religious uniformity except in places where religion itself is reduced to little more than formal assent to uncriticized dogmas and ceremonial. The trend of contemporary thought is not irreligious, for the day of flaunting atheism has gone by—the

OUTLINE OF PRESENT TENDENCIES 3

scientific world inclining toward a spiritual rather than a physical conception of the universe—and all avowed atheists or materialists have invariably expressed their desire to be on the side of science, which they have always contended is in conflict with theology.

New Thought and New Theology are popular phrases which readily attract the ear and give promise of helping many people out of the mental fog in which they are struggling. Man has been called "a religious animal." The normal human being is a great deal more than an animal in his own consciousness, but he is certainly, in a sense, religious.

Revelation has long been a word to conjure with, but its close connection with *discovery* has not always (or indeed usually) been made apparent. A great error has been made by separating these two words, placing them far apart indeed as though they were necessarily antagonists when, in reality, they stand for two aspects of the same experience.

If something is revealed to us it inevitably follows that we are capable of beholding it, therefore we discover it. The object is as much present if we are blind as if our sight is phenomenally keen, but

4 THE RELIGION OF TO-MORROW

our blindness prevents us from being aware of its vicinity.

If this universe in which we dwell is a much greater universe than any of us know,—and some of us undoubtedly know more than others,—then the revelations made to distinguished prophets are really their own discoveries in a very vital sense, for they saw visions and heard voices while those around them were practically deaf and blind.

All religious systems from the oldest to the most recent, and from the largest to the smallest, start with some claim of a more or less distinctly prophetic nature. Prophets antedate priests, therefore it is to prophets and not to priests that we must look chiefly for help along the road of spiritual discovery.

As so many works of great historical interest and value have already flooded the book-market and supplied many a pressing demand for reliable information on matters of religious history, we shall make no attempt to compete with any of these nor to restate unnecessarily what has been already so clearly stated. The following pages are intended chiefly for the many who have neither time nor disposition to wade through libraries or to study works displaying great scholarly erudition, but who

OUTLINE OF PRESENT TENDENCIES 5

desire a few helpful suggestions of a practical as well as contemplative nature.

In dealing from time to time with much that is connected with ancient beliefs and customs, it has been our definite purpose to call attention only to what is, in some degree, influencing modern thought and practice, and it seems hardly necessary to lay stress on the fact that a very large percentage of contemporary ideas and customs are derived from extremely ancient sources. The more deeply we penetrate to the core of different religious systems the more thoroughly convinced must we become that they have nearly all a common origin, and that origin may be twofold. Spiritual Teachers of exceptional attainments, and with extraordinary insight into the mysteries of the universe, have unquestionably appeared at intervals in the history of our planet, and though no one among them all may have instituted a Church, or even a Movement, in the conventional acceptance of these terms, the impress of these Initiates, Adepts, Masters, Hierophants,—call them what we will,—has been left unmistakably and ineffaceably upon the lands in which they have chiefly lived and wrought. These Spiritual Leaders of humanity have not been Scribes or Schoolmen and they have left no certain

6 THE RELIGION OF TO-MORROW

writings behind them, but they have determined the Oral Tradition or Secret Doctrine among all peoples, and their influence has been enormous in directing the open teaching and the literature immediately following their times.

These Masters have headed movements in a spiritual manner, but they have never, so far as reliable history informs us, built up sacerdotal systems or enforced any of the ceremonies which have been adopted by framers of systems who have professedly followed in the footsteps of one or other of the great World-Teachers.

We cannot logically expect that coming generations will endorse our limitations when we refuse to endorse those of generations gone by, i.e. if we deserve to be ranked among progressive thinkers. To follow in the footsteps of illustrious ancestors, in the spirit though not in the letter, involves no slavish copying of their actions or repetition of their sayings, but exactly the reverse, seeing that their greatness and usefulness consisted very largely in their progressiveness, alike in spirit and in action. It is no true imitation, much less can it be emulation, of the great ones of the past for us to stand still when they were ever marching forward. "Heir of all the ages, I," and "All before us lies the way,"

OUTLINE OF PRESENT TENDENCIES 7

are lines of noble poetry expressive of the spirit of true religion. While all religious systems, no matter how imperfect some may be, minister to the moral and spiritual requirements of some portion of the human race, it is not possible to formulate a system that can meet all necessities permanently, even though such a task were to be accomplished for an immediate present, because human needs must grow with human growth. But, it may reasonably be asked, do you not admit that a special Divine Messenger might appear on earth and reveal truth infallibly and finally to humanity? Our reply is a decided no, not because we imagine inability on the part of the Teacher, but because we are compelled to make allowance for incapacity to understand on the part of disciples. It is not with the ability of a Spiritual Revelator that we have to do anything like so much as with the developed capacity of those for whose benefit a revelation is being made; it is therefore altogether on the human, never on the divine, side that we have to treat our theme. There have been, and there still are, hierarchies which claim that they are in possession of an infallible spiritual deposit which they, as accredited representatives of Heaven, can mete out to the rest of the human race. But usually one fails to find any

solid substantiation of so high a claim among those who most loudly and persistently put it forward on behalf of their own particular organization.

That esoteric confraternities exist, composed of highly illumined individuals, we are prepared to admit, and also that their influence is used for good in generally unknown ways, averting strife and bloodshed at critical moments when terrific outbreaks appear imminent ; but the ostensible custodians of infallible truth have often proved agitators of strife and supporters of the most violently militant proceedings, while all the while the Messiah is proclaimed Prince of Peace. It is not difficult to discriminate between spiritual religion and intellectual theology. The former is a binding, unifying force tending to draw all nations together into amity ; the latter is a perpetual bone of contention between races and parties and serves to keep the world more disturbed than it would be without it. It is because people so frequently confound the one with the other that religion gets a bad name in many well-disposed quarters, for readers of contemporary literature, as well as that of former centuries, cannot help observing that it is the strife-engendering theologian, never the truly religious philanthropist, who is held up to execration by even the most

OUTLINE OF PRESENT TENDENCIES 9

flagrant opponent of what the critic calls religion. Voltaire has often been called an infidel, but he was nothing of the sort, neither was Thomas Paine, upon whose memory unlimited abuse as well as laudation has been poured, for both these Deists took religionists to task on account of their failure to carry into practice the sublime ethical teachings which they loudly proclaimed as being part of a divine revelation but which their lives set at naught, because they were cruel and heedless of equity in their dealings with their neighbours. Tolstoi was regarded by the ultra-orthodox in Russia as a foe to religion, yet he was one of the most intensely religious of men, and his eccentricity consisted in his honest endeavour to carry the "counsels of perfection" found in the Sermon on the Mount into everyday life. St. George Mivart was excommunicated in his later days by a cardinal of Westminster because of his heretical publications ; yet we all know that tireless scholar was profoundly religious and devoted many years of an active earnest life to the difficult task of persuading a befogged public that science and religion are essentially in complete accord, not at deadly variance.

Dogmatic theology is necessarily rigid and unelastic ; it cannot bend but it may break. Religion

is pliant and adaptable to the varying needs of humanity at different times and in various places, though it is rooted in unalterable fundamentals. The theological warrior and partisan makes the mistake of assuming matters to be fundamental which are only incidental, and then proceeds to anathematize all who do not see eye to eye with him.

The vice of the worst types of theology is that they make salvation, which is purely a matter of spiritual attainment, depend upon intellectual attitudes and emotional states which often bear no good fruit in actual living. There are Catholic saints and there are agnostic saints. Intellectually they are the poles asunder, but spiritually they are in complete accord. Intentionally they are in complete agreement, but mentally they see through very different glasses. These differences of view are largely temperamental and not necessarily moral, as equal excellence of character is compatible with Sacramentalism and Rationalism. The sacramentalist has much to say about channels and means of grace and fences himself around with creed and ritual. For him Church and priest are indispensable, he cannot find God except through their instrumentality, and often his rationalistic neighbour, intellectually speaking, finds no God at all, but he serves the living and true God.

OUTLINE OF PRESENT TENDENCIES 11

by exerting himself to the utmost to benefit his human neighbours. If the Christian world could divest itself entirely of ecclesiastical assumption and rest satisfied with a simple universal gospel such as we find interwoven with much that is not gospel (good news, glad tidings) in the New Testament, it would be an easy task to build on an avowedly Christian foundation a religion of sufficient universality to render it commendable to lovers of peace and goodwill the wide world over ; but to accomplish this highly desirable end in any countries where some form of Christianity is at least verbally professed by a majority of the inhabitants would require many additions to popular admissions as well as numerous subtractions from prevailing creeds. Too many attempts at Free Religion or Universal Religion, so designated, prove almost negligible on account of the extremely negative platform on which many well-disposed persons endeavour to unite. There are always crises in religious history when vehement protests against injurious superstitions attract multitudes and fire enthusiasm ; but the time soon arrives when protest is an almost spent force and a demand arises for a better substitute for the old which has been removed.

The sacerdotal churches continue to hold numerous adherents through the appeals they make by means of "beautiful services" to the artistic and emotional elements and requirements of human nature.

The endeavour to strip religion of all its beautiful apparel and send it out into the world in nudity may appeal to a strong but small minority in many a community, but it can never meet the requirements of all, or even of a healthy majority.

It is lack of imagination and lack of historic sense which leads to the simple negative iconoclasm which appeals to many Secularists, but most of them, if they are at all active and energetic, have strong social and industrial enthusiasms which for the time being satisfy cravings which are met in other instances in the ceremonial churches in quite a different manner, though the two are susceptible of combination.

The greatest question raised to-day, alike by upholders and opponents of religion, is one that immediately concerns practicality. Our age is avowedly utilitarian in the extreme, though there are many advocates of forms of culture which are distinctly super-utilitarian in the common acceptance of the term. But as Professor William James in his later years abundantly proved in his lectures

on Pragmatism (the pragmatist is assuredly one who cares only for the useful) there are so many different kinds of use and so many planes on which utility can be demonstrated that it ill becomes us to narrow down the idea of usefulness to that which ministers solely to the most external side of human necessities.

Human nature is both simple and complex, therefore we need both simplicity and complexity in our religion if we admit the need of any. By simplicity, in the higher sense, may be intended singleness of purpose or unity of aim, and by complexity in the same connexion may be signified the various manifestations of the one Spirit whose nature is unitary but whose ministrations are diverse.

All the Sacred Books of the world display permanent and transitory elements, and it is due to a confounding of these the one with the other that we often find ourselves in a maze or labyrinth of conflicting doctrines and discordant practices.

Permanent elements in religion deal with the abiding essentials of human nature while transient matters concern local and temporal peculiarities. No writer of ancient or modern times has evinced this radical distinction more clearly and convincingly than the Apostle Paul, from whose reputed

writings many phases of accepted Christianity have derived their chief support. The Pauline Epistles abound in profundities intermingled with superficialities ; with matters of permanent value side by side with what appear like trivialities to a vast majority of open-minded students. These differences are not contradictions or discrepancies when read in the light of what the Letters themselves contain, but they throw an immense amount of light upon the varied sources whence the different doctrines and recommendations were supposed to have originally flowed.

When Saul of Tarsus spoke as an ordinary man he gave vent to his personal feelings and prejudices and subsequently accused himself of having sometimes spoken foolishly, but when he felt assured that he was inspired and illuminated with spiritual understanding he left controversial and disciplinary ground far beneath him and rose to sublime heights of spiritual realization and declaration.

Either the higher and lower teachings in the Epistles are due to different authorships literally or they give evidence of a single man being at times highly illumined and uplifted in thought and feeling, and then capable of giving vivid utterance to sublime celestial verities, while at other times living

in consciousness at a very ordinary level and doing scarcely more than reflecting local and temporal limitations. Woman is altogether man's equal "in Christ," but she is regarded as altogether man's subordinate when this chameleon-like apostle is speaking of her from the view-point of inherited and environmental prejudices. To treat any portion of any Bible fairly we must contrast or compare it with other portions of the same Literature, for it is only through the exercise of impartial discrimination that we can reasonably hope to arrive at any edifying conclusion. To quote a text and repeat it like a parrot, and then add the trite phrase "the Bible says so," is to refuse to employ one's reason in matters pertaining to religion even though we feel called upon to employ it vigorously in connection with every other subject.

It is not a sin but a duty to exercise reason with reference to religion, and it is a virtue, not a vice, to refuse assent to any proposition which appears contrary to reason. No truth can possibly contradict reason, but many truths may transcend the compassing grasp of our reason in its present limited stage of development. To accept on trust doctrines which we cannot fathom on account of our mental limitations is by no means equivalent to mentally

swallowing with closed eyes any preposterous nonsense which may be presented to us in the assumed name of theology, which means literally knowledge of God and of things pertaining to Divinity. That there are Masters who know much of which we are generally ignorant we can readily and gladly grant, but they do not command us to believe anything, they only invite us to search for truth as best we know how. The famous statement made long ago by Lessing commends itself to every serious thinker who feels rightly thankful for the opportunity of becoming self-educated in an ever-increasing degree. This profound philosopher said truly that if an angel appeared to a wise man holding two gifts, one in each hand, and one gift were the ability to realize truth instantly without having to search for it, and the other gift was the opportunity of discovering truth by means of search the wise man would choose the latter and not the former offer. It appears conclusively from all we have learned of human progress that the second and not the first gift has been bestowed upon humanity whether we have deliberately selected it or not; and because we must ask in order to receive, and seek in order that we may find, we need feel no discouragement or dismay on account of the

mists which often envelop doctrines and the veil which frequently screens the spiritual universe from mortal observation. That the fog sometimes lifts and that the veil is sometimes pierced we happily know, but a veil hangs yet over the Sanctuary for most of us and the spiritual clouds which obscure our vision are sometimes dense indeed. If we can bring ourselves to give thanks for the clouds they will the sooner roll away, for nothing remains after its work is really finished.

In 1904 Sir Henry Thompson endeared himself to many truthseekers by publishing his splendidly bracing pamphlet "The Unknown (?) God." It was that bracketed note of interrogation between the adjective and the substantive in the title which displayed the exact condition of the learned author's mind. We cannot possibly know all about God, but we can assuredly learn something progressively concerning the illimitable Mind directing the activities of the Universe.

Nothing could be more preposterously absurd than to speak of Deity as Infinite and Eternal and then proceed to assume that we are, any of us, capable of grasping to anything like a full extent the love and wisdom of the Infinite. But are there

any distinct traces of goodness in the universal order? This is the profoundest and most perplexing question raised by many a modern thinker, and we all know something of the mental distress occasioned by serious doubt that benevolence is indeed regnant despite all appearances to the contrary.

Neither old theology nor modern philosophy has been able to satisfy the average seeker after consolatory truth in connection with this enquiry, for old school theologians did not hesitate to declare that a large portion of the human race would probably endure unending misery, and many nineteenth-century philosophers, notably John Stuart Mill, felt that the facts of experience did not justify us in believing that if goodness is perfect in the Divine Being, power could be infinite, or if power be infinite, then goodness must be limited.

Among religious teachers in America no single voice was raised so effectively as that of Theodore Parker in advocacy of simple Theism during the stress and strain of the bitter controversies which agitated the realm of thought in the middle of the last century, and Parker's famous Discourses on Religion are to-day among the best and most convincing arguments in favour of a satisfying

theology available for general use. That there is a difficulty in reconciling supreme goodness with many observed phenomena no thoughtful individual can for a moment deny, but Sir Henry Thompson handled the difficulty bravely and made no endeavour to gloss over those facts which occasion such widespread doubt and dismay, his contention being that a life of struggle is far better for us than a life of unbroken ease, and that as this world is comparable to a school, workshop, or laboratory in which each student or workman is given the opportunity of developing his own character through effort, some mistakes and seeming failures are necessarily incidental to our education.

If we assume that this material world with all its mingled joys and sorrows and seemingly unjust inequalities is the direct product of an almighty fiat, then we cannot reasonably believe in eternal goodness coupled with illimitable power; but if we look upon our present world as our own workshop and see in all the confusion that surrounds us only the results of our own imperfect manipulation of essentially good material, though our difficulties have not been all disposed of we are at least in a position to take a hopeful not to say an altogether optimistic view of the prevailing situation. Many

modern movements, notably Christian Science, have appealed with great force to numerous men and women who want a short cut to mental emancipation from the pain of conflict, and to many such the words and phrases common to certain schools of contemporary metaphysicians make a singularly strong appeal.

Intellectual hallucination, the illusory character of the senses, the unreality in evil, and many kindred ideas have a strange fascination for some ears and no deep thinker can deny that they contain vital germs of precious truth, nevertheless it is very possible to so apply them as to build up a system of philosophy leading into a Fool's Paradise rather than into a true heaven of conscious co-operation with the working forces of the universe. As every system of religion has laid great stress upon the work of healing, at all events at the time of its inception and during the earlier portion of its career, we are not surprised to find that those aspects of religious thought and life to-day which are exciting the widest interest are founded in the same determination to show practical fruits in the form of a successful healing ministry. Disguise the matter as we may, it is impossible to successfully refute the proposition that in every age of the world, and in every country, the majority of

devotees at religious shrines have anticipated some actual benefit to accrue from their devotions both in the present world and in some world to come, and though this mental attitude has undoubtedly its sordid side and justifies much familiar protest against popular religious exercises, it has another side immeasurably more exalted, viz. an unselfish desire on the part of worshippers to secure blessings for others even more than for themselves, in which case we may rest satisfied in all reason that the aspirations of these benevolently disposed individuals cannot fail to accomplish beneficent results in their own lives, enabling them to be more useful than they otherwise could be in promoting the general weal. Public religious exercises must of necessity have a social value or they are unnecessary, as no one need attend a church, temple, synagogue, mosque, or any other sort of specially dedicated building to offer merely private prayer and engage in silent meditation, unless it be urged (and it well may be) that a consecrated atmosphere is a great help to quiet individual spiritual exercises.

But public worship must always have a large social element in it or it soon degenerates into merely formal conventional observance, and in

consequence of its often having done so it is now frequently discarded and classed among many other practices which are little more than fashionable and, therefore, easily negligible usages.

Whether the working masses of to-day are justified in their protests against religious ministers or otherwise, we cannot fail, if we are reasonable thinkers, largely to sympathize with the motive for their protests, seeing that it is almost always based either upon the supposition that religious officials are mercenary and, therefore, insincere, or else upon the plea that they fail to concern themselves with those mighty problems vitally affecting human outward welfare with which all such protesters say a religious organization should concern itself very largely if it is to deserve and hold the esteem of the world's real workers. Too many churches and chapels are places where money and social position are so highly estimated that the average working man or woman feels painfully out of place, and, worst of all, there must ever be an air of insincerity most unpleasantly obvious wherever the impression has gained a foothold that those who minister and those who are ministered to are alike under the spell of Mammon's blighting influence. To run a

place of worship as a business corporation is to so belittle the idea of sanctity that such complete secularization of a temple leads many sincerely religious people to refuse its ministrations altogether, maintaining that it is a hindrance rather than an aid to spiritual growth, and where Mammon is the divinity adored we cannot accuse those who forsake the shrine of any indifference to that essential religion which seeks to worship the unseen SPIRIT in sincerity and truth.

The religion of to-morrow will not be thus handicapped or obscured, for it will have risen Phoenix-like out of the ashes of the changing systems which are now disintegrating to give it birth. The letter must be pierced and broken that the spirit may emerge, even as the shell of the egg and the cocoon or chrysalis must be broken through that the expanding bird or butterfly may emerge. It is not religion that is dying or departing but only that its old vestments are being changed, then when after the stress and strain of the next few years shall be accomplished the reconstructive work now actively in progress we shall all have abundant cause for rejoicing that the hampering fetters are removed, and religion itself no longer swathed in mummy cloths, and no longer mistaken for its

24 THE RELIGION OF TO-MORROW

forsaken shell, shall burst upon the world in resurrection robes ready to satisfy the deathless yearnings of the human spirit for conscious communion with the Source and Centre of universal activities.

CHAPTER II

THE IDEA OF GOD IN ALL RELIGIONS—ONE SUPREME BEING AND MANY SUBORDINATE DIVINITIES

THOUGH it has never been seriously disputed that the GOD-IDEA is, in some one or other of its myriad forms, common to almost all religious systems, if not absolutely to all, it is only recently that scholarly research conducted by Occidental students has led unmistakably to the conclusion that the ancient Egyptian faith was essentially monotheistic and therefore only incidentally polytheistic. In that extremely interesting and profusely illustrated work in two large volumes, "The Gods of Egypt," by Wallis Budge, the famous Egyptologist connected with the British Museum, this fact is conclusively established by numerous quotations from The Book of the Dead and translations from many ancient papyri. To the modern mind there is no necessary conflict between essential monotheism and incidental polytheism, because to

many contemporary thinkers the idea of Celestial Hierarchies is fully as intelligible as it was to ancient peoples almost universally, and as it also was to the Gnostics among early Christians. The Eternal Absolute, the Unconditioned One who can have no second, is indeed the God of Israel if we take into account only the very highest, purest and subtlest of all Jewish ideas of Deity ; but it would be folly for any student of comparative religion to attempt to maintain in the face alike of Biblical and extra-Biblical testimony that the general God-idea in ancient Israel had reached to anything like so sublime a mystical or philosophical altitude. The concept of the Supreme One is indeed to be found in Jewish literature throughout the ages, but the Children of Israel as a multitude never seem to have thought of God as more than the one living and true God amid a vast number of inferior and unreliable deities ; and when it came to actual communion with the God of Israel this was usually accomplished through the ministry of angels, except in those rare prophetic instances where the greatest among the seers maintained that it was by means of a "still small voice" that they apprehended the Divine Reality. We have no valid grounds for supposing that people who lived long ago were

different from ourselves in any important particulars, and as we are witnesses to amazing varieties of human attainment in any land to-day which we may select as an illustration, it is by no means difficult to believe that in days of old the masses of the people, even in cultured Egypt before its decadence, were far from highly enlightened, but they had men and women of exceptional culture among them, and not only such, there were also seers and seeresses of great lucidity who could pierce the veil to a great extent which ordinarily screens the spiritual from material vision. There were also "mediums" of all descriptions among the dwellers in the Nile Delta, many of whom were more remarkable by far than the average psychic or sensitive of to-day. The Spiritism of all ancient peoples was subordinate to their ideas of Divine Sovereignty; it was indeed perfectly natural and simple and founded upon actual human experience, as many of the spiritistic theories of the present are likewise founded. The populace is never transcendental or given to the acceptance of abstract ideas which are the delight of all profound philosophers; we therefore find no cause for amazement in the crudity and fantastic character of many an ancient idea of multitudinous divine existences, a step

higher on the ladder of life than the people who paid homage to these inferior divinities and yet far below the standard set for superior men and women in bygone ages as well as to-day.

We can never deal intelligently with our present exhaustless theme without taking into strict account the multifarious stages of human development with which we must concern ourselves theoretically before we can in any degree put ourselves mentally in the place of those with whose ideas of life and its manifestations we undertake to deal. "It seems so to me" is a very common but an immensely enlightening sentence, and we must know something intimately concerning the speaker's inward condition before we can reason at all helpfully on the basis of the quoted phrase.

It is not necessary to speculate as to what we should respectively think and feel "if you were I and I were you," but it is important to think out as clearly as possible how we should think and feel were we at some other stage in our intellectual and moral journey than at the exact point where now we stand. The two chief divisions of our subject must necessarily be those designable as Objective and Subjective, for though there are many less easily definable positions, those two are the only ones which can be so sharply

contrasted as to render mental opposition at once self-evident.

By opposition we do not mean irreconcilable contradiction as between love and hate or truth and falsehood, but simply two diametrically opposite sets of mental experiences and also the findings of two states of mind as opposite the one to the other as the acts of looking inward and looking outward.

We are not in the least prepared to hold a brief for one of these attitudes as against the other ; on the contrary we can easily see how rational and useful will prove an adequate synthetic philosophy which will explain how inevitably necessary are these two sets of experiences ; but so long as they are confounded or their distinctive claims to serious attention remain unrecognized, we shall find ourselves floundering in a maze of needless mystery when we should be far healthier and happier in the clear atmosphere of a far more inclusive philosophy. To the mind which delights in endeavouring to contemplate the Infinite,—though infinitude must ever elude the profoundest grasp,—there is a singular fascination in bathing in the ocean of the limitless, to feel oneself immersed in the boundless whole, and while enjoying, and that most keenly, a delicious sense of spiritual individuality to renounce

all claim to separated consciousness. This ecstasy is the rapture of the mystic, and to all who can in any true measure realize it, it must prove a perennial source of illimitable delight. The idea of God to a true mystic is indescribable, no one can expound it or in any way reduce it to a thesis, and were we all of mystic temperament we should be content to *feel* and scarcely ask to *know*. But though exterior knowledge as applied to divine concepts has no interest for the mystic, he possesses a kind of knowledge far more truly real than any scientific information can ever be, because he never doubts, for no one can doubt his own interior assurances though it is impossible to transmit them to even those among our neighbours whom we regard as our most intimate friends. But though these marvellous interior experiences which constitute the root-foundation of all mystical realization are indeed incommunicable, they are none the less entitled to the most serious consideration at the hands of all who seek to deal fairly and intelligibly with varieties of spiritual experience.

The axiom is logically unanswerable that for every effect there must be an efficient cause, and as these mystical experiences are unquestionably an impressive factor in human history, they cannot be

lightly dismissed as mere vapourings of a few disordered intellects and overwrought imaginations. We find abundant evidence that deep interior spiritual consciousness of a Divine Reality has been the portion of the truly greatest and wisest of men ; the unenlightened horde has always either tacitly accepted an arbitrarily imposed system of dogmatic theology or else alternated mere materialism with grotesque superstitions, many of them of the most revolting types ; it is only the refined intelligence of the most inspired members of the human family which has generated and conceived a sublime mystical philosophy, and those who have conceived it, whenever they have endeavoured to promulgate it have usually been accounted insane or else subjected to persecution by the ruling external powers, to whom interior illumination is a thing unthinkable.

As we study one system of religion after another, we soon come to find that there have been mystics of different grades within the bosom of all accepted cults, and these have always been the most fearless and conscientious among the devotees of all these differing forms of worship. There is nothing morally elevating or mentally imposing in the spectacle of a multitude of men, women and children bowing to

popular idols, conforming to established ceremonial and accepting blindly the dicta of a reigning priesthood ; but there is something magnificent and awe-inspiring in the contemplation of some seemingly solitary individual claiming to have found Deity in the depths of inner consciousness uninfluenced by the affirmations or denials of the oftentimes believing, though generally unreasoning, crowd.

What may be termed the genuine mystic consciousness is something totally apart from that fanciful substitute which is frequently mistaken for it, viz. a fantastic and illusory supposition that one who undergoes interior raptures is on that account entitled to be ranked among the world's pure Illuminati. There is also a spiritual arrogance and haughty exclusiveness sometimes mistaken for mystic consciousness which can be nothing but a mischievous delusion, for whatever tends to spiritual pride and fancied superiority over others is not illumination but spiritual self-conceit in masquerade.

Turning from the essentially mystical to the more external sources whence the sublimest ideas of Deity have found their way into human consciousness we may well take into account the widespread claim that great spiritual luminaries, properly termed World-Teachers, have appeared and ministered in

many lands at different climacteric periods in our planet's history. These veritable Masters have founded the chief religious systems which gradually drew into their fold all manner of elements, so that while the essential elements of a Master's teaching remained permanently undisputed, so much extraneous material was added and so many malpractices were introduced that these accretions and excrescences so greatly overlaid the original doctrine that it often appeared to the casual observer that the whole religious fabric was a despicable superstition. To the serious student who is determined to delve to the bottom of this matter there are no insuperable difficulties preventing rational discrimination between what is and what is not part and parcel of a true spiritual revelation. If all were pure gold or all were worthless alloy we should never need to try or test anything, for were it all perfect we could accept the whole unquestionably, or were it all spurious it would be easy enough to reject it wholesale. Students of ancient religious systems can see clearly enough without carrying their researches very far, that ancient Egypt and modern Europe have had many things in common. In the Nile Delta stands the Great Pyramid at Gizeh, well termed a "miracle

in stone," and in its close vicinity are fifty or more minor pyramids resembling it closely in architectural design but differing from it so widely in spiritual suggestiveness that the Great Pyramid reminds us of the 19th chapter of Isaiah, which speaks of a Pillar of Witness and of an Altar to the Most High God situated in Egypt, while all the other pyramids bear testimony only to the prevailing beliefs and practices of the Egyptians of old in general. That most mysterious of all Biblical characters, Melchizedec, to whom Abraham does obeisance, is described as a priest of the Most High God, a singularly enlightening expression, as it clearly points to the existence of many priests of lesser divinities, all of whom rendered certain specific services in the community and were connected with the numerous temples dedicated to the popular gods and goddesses.

Because we cannot regard these many divinities as worthy of supreme adoration we are not debarred from regarding them as glorified heroes and heroines, at one time actual historical personages who became gradually elevated to the rank of gods and goddesses in popular esteem. The recent canonization at Rome of Jeanne d'Arc, the Maid of Orleans, and her acknowledged position to-day as one of the spiritual

patronesses of France throws a great deal of light on the origin and history of gods and goddesses of old. No one seems to doubt that the peasant girl of Domremy actually lived and that she saw visions and accomplished the marvellous feat of heading an army and proving a most successful general in a day when woman's position in Europe was far different from what it is to-day ; and even now it would be a marvel if a girl could display anything like the ability for skilful generalship displayed by the Maid of Orleans. This damsel was condemned to death through a conspiracy, and for several centuries varied opinions were held regarding her sanctity within the Church of Rome which has recently pronounced her Blessed. If saints are being acknowledged to-day in this manner after centuries of comparative oversight on the part of ecclesiastical authorities, it is not difficult to surmise, even when actual proof is lacking, that the intensely human divinities of days of old were only unusual men and women around whose name and fame there gradually gathered so brilliant a halo of traditional sanctity that eventually they were admitted to the Pantheon and esteemed protectors, in a special manner, of the lands in which they had lived and to whose interests they had proved devoted. Ignatius Donnelly in his

highly instructive work "Atlantis" says that the gods and goddesses of Egypt, Greece and Rome were originally rulers in Atlantis, and there is much testimony now accumulating to give body to this assertion. Atlantis was doubtless the cradle of the religion of early Egypt, and history testifies abundantly to the influence of Egyptian thought and practice upon Hellenic ideas and customs. Solon attributed to Egypt, in which he sojourned for some considerable time, much of his remarkable information, and it was largely from Solon that Plato confessedly derived much of his knowledge concerning ancient days. The deposit left in a country by a World-Teacher is never exterminated because it possesses the undying quality of essential truth ; that is why the Great Pyramid is to-day so fascinating an object in the eyes of scientific explorers and religious examiners alike, and that is also why we confront in the Book of the Dead, for example, such profound and exquisite spiritual teachings intermingled with so much that is dubious and apparently absurd. It is only by means of mathematics and geometry that such a structure as the Great Pyramid can be interpreted aright. Form and Number are perpetual in the Universe, and it is only in a structure whose proportions are exact

that the unalterable principles of Nature can be illustrated so that lapse of ages detracts nothing from the accuracy and sublimity of the revelation.

We do not speak deprecatingly of the lesser pyramids (fire temples as the name signifies), but they certainly display no higher concepts than those of the learned in general at the time of their erection. These were places of sepulture, like many modern churches, but by no means mausoleums simply, any more than Westminster Abbey is only a tomb though it is very largely a sepulchre, but a famous church also. The many inscriptions on the various pyramids, both internally and externally displayed contrast vividly with the inscriptionless monument to the Unseen Reality which the Great Pyramid uniquely is. Freemasons, and especially Co-Masons who are Theosophists, will appreciate, even at a glance, the tremendous difference in suggestive symbolism displayed by the one silent undecorated witness to the One Spirit and the manifold testimonies to prevailing belief in gods and lords many, shown forth in its immediate neighbourhood. We can readily understand the veneration in which so-called sacred animals were held by the mass of the populace, but knowing also how closely interwoven was the science of astrology with animal symbology

it is by no means difficult to perceive how wide must have been the intellectual gulf dividing the ordinary venerator of bulls, birds, cats and many other highly esteemed creatures, and the majestic idea of the constellations, all regarded as celestial hierarchies clothed with material semblances, which was clearly the thought suggested to the minds of the most enlightened by these same emblematical configurations. But relatively sublime though these exalted concepts were they could not reach to the far more glorious ideas of the Great Initiates, the true Sons of Hermes, who saw through all pictorial veils, alike of nature and of art, ever varying expressions of the One Life, simple in essence but multitudinous in modes of expression. Egypt and India in this regard were fully in accord, for all who have studied Oriental religion and philosophy even slightly, know that Para-Brahm, the Unconditioned Absolute, is the sole object of perfect adoration on the part of those exalted and intuitive Brahmins to whom the multifarious divinities acknowledged by the bulk of Hindus are but so many partial revelations of that Principle of Being whom none can measure and none explain. Osiris, Isis and Horus in Egypt, like Brahma, Vishnu and Siva in India and Ormuzd and Ahriman in the Parsee

faith, can only be limited expressions of the Infinite.

There can be but one Absolute Reality "in whom and by whom and through whom are all things," to quote a familiar text from the New Testament. But we are living relative lives in a relative world, consequently we require accommodated revelations of Deity adapted to our needs, and if these needs vary and increase with our self-conscious development it stands to reason and necessity that our ideas of Deity must be subject to expansion. The religion of a remote past may be much nearer to the religion of to-morrow than the religion of a recent past, for no observer of the map of the world can doubt that we are now emerging, and that rapidly, from an age of spiritual obscuration in which blind following of exoteric doctrines and practices was the general rule, though evidences are abundant that the torch of spiritual illumination, deeply hidden at many times and in many lands, was never extinguished, burning as it does with an inextinguishable blaze.

It may be beyond the power of many students of the signs of the present time to explain exactly why we are now in the midst of so searching an examination of all ancient creeds and ceremonies,

but one good answer to this oft-recurring query is that we are living in a time of special harvesting, therefore everything is being brought up for inspection, and only through impartial comparison of one set of ideas and practices with another can we adequately prepare ourselves for that broader coming religion of humanity which must include all the excellences of past systems and present to the enquiring world a comprehensible and satisfactory solution of the many vexing problems which still beset seekers after truth, who can be satisfied neither with negation nor with dogmatism.

It is often said flippantly that the divinities of the Pagan world are dead, when they are indeed very much alive. To any discerning reader of contemporary literature it must be self-evident that an increasing number of highly intelligent people are steadily revising their former judgment of so-called Paganism, and without by any means going to the length of attempting literally to establish in the modern world the mythological systems of the past, it is coming to be very widely felt that the classic Greeks in particular, in days of Hellenic splendour, had enshrined in their mythology far deeper and more vital truths than any of those complacent British academicians ever supposed when, but compara-

tively a few years ago, Greek literature was studied only in the most superficial manner at universities by professors and students who took it complacently for granted that their particular brand of Christianity contained all the truth revealed to the human race, while all outside of it was only guess-work if not positively erroneous doctrine.

We do not deny that *esoteric* Christianity has embodied within it all the truth contained in earlier systems, and this interior element may have always been glimpsed by the most learned doctors of the Church, but the average clergy have known practically nothing of it, though, as Arthur Edward Waite declares in his very scholarly work "The Hidden Church of the Holy Grail," there is an "implicit" in generally accepted Christian doctrine which is a true Mystery, and the same author in his equally learned treatise "The Secret Doctrine in Israel" makes an equal claim concerning Judaism. From Occultism and Spiritualism we may reasonably expect to derive much explanatory information at the hands of well-informed and level-headed Occultists and Spiritualists, and it is a promising sign that really valuable books are multiplying, written by men and women who are not carried away by fantasies but determined to compare creed with

42 THE RELIGION OF TO-MORROW

creed and philosophy with philosophy in a spirit of impartial review.

When one reads afresh Pope's "Essay on Man," if the reader is imbued with the best modern time-spirit, the sage counsel of that wise poet of a bygone century appeals with all the strength and virility of an entirely new revelation. To attempt to define and, therefore, limit God is actually to dethrone the idea of Deity, for there is wisdom profound in the trenchant saying "God defined is God dethroned"; but though "the proper study of mankind is man," it is through a sympathetic study of human nature that we arrive at our best ideas of Deity, for God is revealed to humanity in and through itself.

Among modern American Theists the inimitable Theodore Parker still holds a place of unquestioned eminence and spiritual authority of the noblest kind, for though he was so utterly undogmatic that he formulated no fettering creed and placed no limit upon mental liberty, his own convictions were so deep, and the utterance of them so amazingly soul-compelling as well as eloquent, that we may well turn to the pages of his Discourses on Religion to find more suggestive teaching of the highest order than we can readily find in the same compass

elsewhere. It is for this reason that though Theodore Parker never founded a sect and was hardly *persona grata* during his earthly lifetime among the cultured Unitarians who never quite accepted him, it is now not only by Unitarians,—though they have been foremost in circulating his printed words,—that this illumined soul is valued as a true finder of Divinity, not in books or institutions but in the soul of humanity, where alone a reliable revelation can be discovered. That very earnest and conscientious man who founded the Theistic Church in London, Rev. Charles Voysey, acknowledged a deep debt of gratitude to Theodore Parker, and in one extremely important respect Parker and Voysey and all simple Theists are entirely in accord, and that is in their utter repudiation of the alleged final authority of avowedly sacred books, divinely separated men and heaven-ordained institutions. Human reason, conscience and affection are the only three sources whence the uncompromising Theist expects to derive knowledge concerning Deity. This attitude is, of course, intensely anti-sacerdotal and it can easily be carried to an extreme. In its iconoclastic aspects it is undeniably reactionary and has been brought about by priestcraft and the terrible bondage in

which multitudes have been held by tyrannical usurpers of the right of every individual to use his reason in matters pertaining to religion. But though this extremely individualistic position may not be all inclusive, as it always ignores and sometimes ferociously protests with great vehemence against all other spiritual leadership than that of the inner light, it certainly bears glorious testimony to the capabilities, from a spiritual standpoint, of the average human being, and therefore tends greatly to elevate our idea of humanity at large. There is great need for this attitude to-day and many people are being led to the development of the noblest characters by cultivating the grace of spiritual self-reliance; at the same time it may well be true that not everyone can grasp this interior vision, and for those who cannot, the alternative seems inevitably to be acceptance of a teacher's say-so or entire agnosticism.

Unless we keep steadily in view at all times the fact that human needs are various, and that therefore what one type of mind requires another finds a drawback, we shall find it impossible to explain intelligibly the startling religious paradoxes with which we are incessantly confronted, and among them all the most persistently conspicuous

is the fact that a view of Deity which positively helps some men and women to live nobler and stronger lives is a handicap to others' progress, a veritable incubus which they must throw aside that they may walk in spiritual freedom and cultivate the best that is within them. That there must be pragmatic or utilitarian elements in the religion of to-morrow no student of anthropology can well deny, and surely it is not degrading to the thought of pure universal religion to declare that it contains diverse elements, dissimilar in appearance like the seven hues of a rainbow, yet essentially unitary, even as all the colours are but variant fractions of a single primal ray. As Felix Adler, the widely esteemed president of the Society for Ethical Culture in New York, has convincingly declared, "Agnosticism is no finality," but it is without doubt a necessary intellectual step from a lower to a loftier religious standing-ground. Even Atheism, in its milder form, may be temporarily inevitable in some cases. This is extremely well explained in the Autobiography of Annie Besant detailing twenty years' travel from a form of Christianity to which one who has outgrown its limitations can never return, through a wilderness of reputed atheism (invariably unsatisfying) toward a phase of

CHAPTER III

CELESTIAL HIERARCHIES AND THE SPIRITUAL ASPECT OF ASTROLOGY

To every student of ancient religious history it must appear self-evident that astrology played a very prominent and essential part in the religious concepts of the most distinguished nations, not one of which has failed to supply evidence of the high esteem in which the star-gazers were universally held, and these Wise Men of the East were certainly astrologers as well as astronomers. In times of old astrology and astronomy were so inseparably united that it would be impossible to deal with one without considering the other also, and the astrology of such celebrities as Berosus the Chaldean was by no means a materialistic or fanciful superstition based upon any "supposed" influences exerted by the other planets in our system upon this earth, but its foundations are laid deep and wide in so sublime a concept of the universe that whenever we contrast

it with the puny theories long entertained by the masses in more modern days we cannot be otherwise than deeply impressed with the majestic panorama outspread before our mental vision.

The shallow statements often made by astronomers regarding astrology prove conclusively that they are either ignorant of a subject they have never studied, or else that their judgment is so warped by prejudice that they inadvertently confound things which radically differ, in so bewildering a manner as to convince no impartial student of anything except that certain self-evident fallacies are incredible from a scientific view-point.

Before endorsing or condemning astrology we certainly ought to know some little of the foundation upon which it rests. This is none other than the unity of the Solar System. That the illiterate masses supposed the earth to be the centre of the system, and the sun a ball of fire possibly ten thousand miles distant, and the stars lamps set in a stable firmament, is no doubt the case, for uninformed persons judging all phenomena, as children invariably judge, from the point of view of obvious appearance only, it stands to reason that they could not reach any other conclusion than the one at which they actually arrived.

Some of us think ourselves immeasurably superior to the ancients in our paltry intellectual conceit, but it is our ignorance, not our knowledge, which makes us so ridiculously arrogant and supercilious. Bacon's famous saying "A little learning is a dangerous thing" applies not only to a small amount of learning but also to exclusive study along a single line, and without intending the slightest insult to any astronomers, we cannot but note from the published utterances of some of them that their information is so entirely technical, that psychic elements in the universe are for them unknown realities. To a man like the illustrious astronomer of France, Camille Flammarion, such a remark could never apply, for he is essentially a poet as well as a scientist, and when a mere boy produced a marvellous and fascinating work on the plurality of inhabited worlds, and much later in life wrote delightful romances in which he interwove scientific facts with brilliant imagination. All religion must have something to do with the imagination as well as with the reason and the will ; but on that account we have no charge to bring against it any more than against science itself, which cannot thrive where imagination is repressed unduly or seems entirely absent. Professor Tyndall, whose famous Belfast

Address delivered in 1874 seemed to many minds to portray utter materialism in the mind of its author, declared in favour of the scientific imagination in the strongest and most convincing manner, and he was by no means alone in his eulogy of that far too often derided and discredited human faculty.

But though imagination has always played a conspicuous part in the findings of seers and artists of the highest rank, and has never been absent from the speculations of the best philosophers, science is very much on the side of the ancient seers and sages to-day with its outspoken testimony to the reality and solidity of all-pervading ether. Nature permits of no vacuum, so far as we can judge, therefore though it may be right enough when teaching the rudiments of astronomy to speak of the mean distance between the sun and our planet as about ninety-three millions of miles, when we contemplate the omnipresent ether we can find no empty space or simple void or distance between the orbs which stud immensity; consequently the statements made by gifted seers both of ancient and of modern date that there are belts or zones encircling the various planets, and that the outermost of these belts interblend, is very easily comprehensible. The word Matter is a term of extremely wide and elastic

import, for though it is commonly used to cover only what appeals to our five bodily senses, who shall determine the possible extension of sense-perception, and who shall dare to venture the assertion (unless he be an ignoramus) that solid matter, to use a favourite conventional expression, may not extend in ever-increasing (not diminishing) degrees of solidity far beyond the extremely limited region in which our senses usually serve us ?

Occultism and Physical Science are so closely agreed on numerous points that we can draw no rigid line between them, the one actually melting into the other. The definitely scientific utterances of Sir Oliver Lodge, Sir William Ramsay and many other twentieth-century scientists of the highest eminence, allude to the substance of the Universe in terms closely according with the terminology of those long-despised mediæval alchemists who were also practising astrologers in many instances. Alfred Russel Wallace, the veteran naturalist, in his extremely instructive and thought-provoking volume "The World of Life" arrived at a conclusion concerning the Celestial Hierarchies so nearly in accord with very ancient teaching that we cannot fail to see how a reverent and fearless study of Nature leads in all lands and climes to very

SPIRITUAL ASPECT OF ASTROLOGY 53

nearly identical conclusions. When Robert Browning uttered his enigma " man is not Man yet " he rendered himself intelligible in print through correct capitalization. The ordinary man is contrasted with superman by the employment of *m* in the first place and *M* in the second. Masters are *Men* who have been only *men*, therefore Theosophists in general are particular with the use of capitals in their propagandist literature. The Sun of our system, according to the ancients, is spiritually a celestial hierarchy having a material body, and all the planets are lesser hierarchies having also material bodies. There were always meanings within meanings in the mythologies of old, and while some glyph was invariably employed, a hieroglyph was the particular kind of glyph employed by hierophants when dealing with the mighty question of celestial hierarchs and hierarchies. Though we may not find it necessary to confine our thought of directing companies of angels to highly advanced members of what we call the human race exclusively, judging from all ascertained facts concerning universal homogeneity of substance we need not be in the least staggered when confronted with the assertion that all individual intelligences with whom we come in conscious

contact as our superiors in development are of our own Great Family. Spectrum analysis reveals the same constituent elements in immensely distant suns as in our own especial ruler, and if outward consistency is so markedly similar there is no reason for supposing that interior life is widely dissimilar. Whoever was the architect of the Great Pyramid must have had a conception of the Universe large enough to include knowledge of Alcyone of the Pleiades, but though a vast and ineffably glorious Central Sun was a familiar concept among the most enlightened of old, it was only with the relation between the sun and planets in this our home system that astrologers in general dealt. If no one disputes that we are physically indebted to the sun for energy which supplies us with light and heat through the agency of our planetary atmosphere, why should it be difficult to apply the famous Hermetic axiom "As above, so below" to the spiritual influence exerted by the unseen Sun? It no more conflicts with our faith in the Absolute Supreme One to acknowledge the work of planetary angels than to allow for teaching and guiding ministrations on earth which may all be included in Divine appointment.

Were we committed in an ironclad manner, as

happily we are not, to a theory of Divine operation entirely exclusive of all possible recognition of mutual spiritual ministries, we should be compelled, if logically consistent with our creed, to set aside all finite teachers and hold to the exclusive idea of receiving light and help solely through interior communion with Deity. So long as we acknowledge mutuality on the outer plane we can consistently acknowledge it on the inner ; so, if we admit that the moon affects the tides of oceans we can also allow that a spiritual Luna may affect us in some psychic manner and that we are indeed dwellers in a family mansion in which the different planets may be compared with different apartments occupied by different members of a single family. Astrology when undisfigured by harmful accretions is by no means fatalistic in any depressing sense of that much controverted word. We do admit, for we must, that we are social beings with gregarious instincts, consequently no one of us does, or can, live for self alone. Interplanetary influence can be so simply explained as to compel sympathetic consideration at the hands of all open-minded and fairly intelligent persons, but to thus explain it is imperative that we should firmly grasp the family idea as applied to the planets, so that we may

actually think and speak intelligently of brother Mars and of sister Venus. The ugly words "infection" and "contagion" are constantly on the lips of modern speakers, and so exclusively has attention often been turned to the dark side of their connotation that the encouraging aspects of a theory of healthful contagion and infection have been generally overlooked. It is greatly to the credit of "irregular" practitioners in the ample field of healing ministry that the question of the transmission of beneficial energy from healer to patient has been largely insisted upon, and it is nothing short of a shameful libel upon the sanity of the universe to insist upon communicable disease and vice and deny the communicability of health and virtue.

When studying the outlines of astrology we shall find a simple theory of mutual influence originally proclaimed, and as no two planets are just alike, any more than any two nations are precisely similar, we cannot reasonably expect to get the same sort of influence from rapid-moving Mercury as from slower-moving Saturn, though one is just as good and useful as the other. The idea of good and evil, regarded as opposing forces of almost equal power, is no part of the ancient Solar religion which taught

of a confraternity of hierarchies, each fulfilling some especial ministry, and among these Saturn had honourable place with all the rest. Saturn and Satan may have originally had but one significance, but if so we have certainly no reason for calling any planet *evil*, though there is one which has always had the reputation for presenting the shadow side of life's experiences and actually furnishing the gymnastic apparatus by means of which neophytes are, through trial and conquest, developed into hierophants.

Taking this entirely reasonable and altogether optimistic view of planetary influences, we are happily steering clear of every valid objection brought against the reputed doctrines of some astrologers who practically neutralize the value of all their otherwise instructive teaching by unduly minimizing our individual ability to govern ourselves in the midst of all seemingly adverse circumstances. Nothing could well be more depressing than a theory of human existence which placed us so utterly under the direction of external influences that we could do nothing other than automatically submit to the sway of some unknown extraneous pressure, and even should the source whence this direction came become measurably known to us, it

would seem that such knowledge would be very nearly useless were we unable to utilize it for our gradual individualization of self-determined character. "The stars incline but do not compel," is one of those wise sayings applicable alike to all manner of influences that may at any moment be acting around us. We have all in some measure, though in widely varying degree, a sense of discretionary ability, and to the rational anthropologist no instinct of human nature, and certainly no deep-rooted and growing consciousness, can ever be ignorable.

The ancient Hermetic doctrine which lies at the base of all the great historic systems of religion and philosophy provides us with an ample theory of human experiences, no matter how widely diversified these may be, because it treats the individual as a microcosmic replica of the entire universe and deals with the growth of worlds and the conscious development of human entities in the light of unitary law. Just as an infant is dependent upon parents or other guardians and providers of food, shelter and raiment, but when infancy and childhood pass and adolescence is reached the youth or maiden becomes capable not only of supporting self but also of contributing toward the support of others, so does

an acknowledgment of seniority and juniority in manifested life throughout our solar system explain our riddles by teaching us to contemplate the relationship which must of necessity exist between the more advanced and the less developed. To overlook spiritual superintendence altogether on the plea that any sort of oversight cripples individual liberty and decreases the mind's dependence upon "inner light," is a fallacy into which extreme religious democrats are apt to fall in their eager zeal to escape entirely from every vestige of subserviency to extraneous authority. The basis of this exaggerated claim to total individual independency is without doubt admirable, and it would be thoroughly defensible were we all at an equal stage in spiritual evolution where there could be no leaders and no led. Granting the theory of spiritual and mental progress, and granting also the reasonableness of the Cosmic Plan as unfolded to the mental gaze of Hermetic philosophers, we are forced to the acceptance on a very much wider scale than common of the most universal law revealed in Nature with which we have become acquainted by every variety of experience. The astronomical religion of antiquity was the cultus of the most enlightened and entirely beyond the

appreciation of the multitude, who did actually conform to its most external form and language but perceived extremely little of its true significance. To worship the sun and the stars in a literal external manner was quite natural to the observer of phenomena only, and to simply believe that we are all in the power of forces entirely beyond our control is but to accept the obvious, while experiencing nothing of that rising tide of inward energy which ascends higher and higher with every upward step in human progress, individual and collective, which assures us beyond peradventure, through the force of ineradicable interior conviction, that we are possessors of potential energy which can only be actualized by persistent effort to make those external things our servants which hitherto have been our masters.

The Solar Hierarchy may be compared to a company of architects, while the Planetary Hierarchies may be called builders. The familiar terms Archangels and Angels have the same relative significance. The balance of power and influence must always be in the keeping of the most enlightened, therefore in every sense of the term the solar or spiritually unfolded members of a race must be its supreme directing factors. All the planets

revolve around the sun and our sun revolves around a much greater sun than itself. If this world is regarded as a school, a workshop, a laboratory, and it is certainly all of these and probably a great deal more also in its deeper aspects, we find no difficulty in realizing in some definitely intelligible way how and why it is that we are in one sense under the stars and in another sense free individuals. Freedom is a growing power in the case of all progressive entities. Our liberty can only be commensurate with our knowledge, for while we may be perfectly free to do all we can, it is impossible to conceive of our being any freer than our unfolded capacity has rendered us. The Wise Men who are truly said to rule their stars while the unwise are governed by them are not of a different race from the foolish, but only in the same sort of different stage of development as Parsifal at the end from Parsifal at the beginning of the story.

To understand the fundamental verities of the ancient Solar Religion one needs to grasp little if anything more than what may be termed the generally accepted modern scientific view of the homogeneous constitution of the Universe. Whatever higher orders of intelligences than progressed humanity may actually exist we do not know, for it

would be the height of absurd presumption to claim that our knowledge is omniscient, but regardless of whatever hierarchies may exist beyond our present human ken, we can safely declare that the human mind has never thought out a scheme of things too wonderful or beautiful to be true. The perfect orderliness of the ancient cosmic idea, as we find it expressed in that valuable and curious archaic literature now being examined and deciphered with painstaking assiduity by some of the brightest intellects of to-day, is its chief claim to reverence at our hands. No barbaric or untutored races could possibly have conceived anything approaching the Hermetic philosophy which for clearness of statement far surpasses the bulk of modern attempts at constructing a world-theory.

The nine Choirs of Angels, of which theologians in Christendom are still fond of speaking, were well known to the Hermetists of old, and whenever the veil is pierced which has long concealed the esoteric centre of all so-called pagan mythology, we discover this sublime cosmology running through the whole and rendering Homer and the other Classic authors fully intelligible, despite the fantastic outer garb in which the inner doctrine is couched. It has often been said of Socrates that he denied the prevailing

religion of Greece and treated Homer and the other accepted authorities with disdain. That this may have appeared to be the case is not difficult to understand, because he undertook to tear away the exoteric veil and show his students as much as possible of the interior meaning ; his attitude was therefore very similar to that of those devout and thoroughly conscientious teachers in the Christian Church to-day who bring down upon their devoted heads many an anathema because instead of confining themselves to the shell they insist upon penetrating to the kernels of the doctrines and ceremonies which rigid literalists devoutly worship in a superficial manner, without any idea that the letter they prize so highly is only a covering thrown over an interior doctrine of far profounder significance.

Astrologers to-day are broadly divisible into two distinct companies, between which there are many minor modifications. On the one side we find the fatalistic fortune-telling astrologer, not usually very well informed, who often brings astrology into discredit if not into actual disgrace, and, on the other hand, we encounter the theosophical astrologer whose views of the whole subject are ennobling and sublime. Here again it is only a question of

superficiality versus profundity, and Spiritualism versus Materialism. To the superficial observer of the skies man is only a puppet, a veritable plaything of fate, a creature of outside influences hedged in by an environment out of whose clutches he cannot possibly escape. In some instances this environment is favourable and friendly and in other instances unfavourable and unfriendly, but in every instance it is regarded as dominant over the will of the individual who may seek to modify it; therefore to know one's horoscope is useless, as no one can change the events which are predestined to occur.

The opposite school of teaching, which is highly bracing and encourages a putting forth of one's utmost endeavour to carve out an individual destiny, builds upon a much deeper and firmer foundation and attaches far less importance to environment, because far more to individual effort. Paracelsus, a few centuries ago in Europe, taught along the same elevating line as did the seers and sages of ancient Egypt, Chaldea, Persia, Greece and other renowned seats of bygone civilizations, and though Indian philosophy is often found to be fatalistic on the surface we can turn to India as well as to Egypt and other more westerly lands to find a system of astrology fully as compatible with the

thought of human liberty as any teaching we can find elsewhere. The fatalism which has blighted India is a corruption of the ancient teaching and it is now happily being vanquished, not by zealous missionaries who seek to turn away the native populations from their ancestral faith, but by those earnest advocates of universal religion whose aim it is to unveil the hidden truth in all systems and exhibit a basis of spiritual unity upon which all who love truth and seek to practise righteousness may stand and work together. Any merely superficial view of the practices and superstitions common to various districts of the Orient may cause revulsion of feeling in the minds of Europeans and Americans who have been brought up from infancy to venerate different symbols and to express their devotions at differently furnished shrines, but the deep student of underlying unity cannot fail to perceive that it is only the forms that are varying, the abiding essence is unmistakably the same in all. The letter of all religious systems and Calendars bears unmistakable witness to their astronomical and astrological origin, but when we discern something of the inner meaning we soon get far away from anything like a materialistic view of Solar Worship which would naturally appear idolatrous to the spiritually-minded because

it would seem that material orbs were set up as objects of supreme veneration. But has not the same charge often been brought by one denomination of Christians against another, as well as by Christians against non-Christians? If we look only at the surface doctrines and ceremonies of many Christian organizations, does it not appear that their worship consists in paying adoration to bread and wine in the eucharist and in attaching magical properties to the use of water in baptism? and it can hardly be doubted that the unspiritualized worshippers at many Christian fonts and altars do actually see only the external substances and rites in the same manner that the mechanical devotee of some Asiatic cult sees only the image before his material vision and satisfies himself with a perfunctory observance of decreed ceremonies. If we could induce spiritual-mindedness by abolishing outward rites, we should certainly feel called upon to do our utmost to abolish them, but what actually occurs in many instances when they are ruthlessly discarded and no efficient substitute offered in their place?

To the student of the Jewish and Christian Scriptures who intends to examine them impartially and in the light of comparative religion, the

numerous references to astrology in both Testaments will more than suffice to prove that the Holy Bible of the Occident is by no means a work standing by itself apart from the other Bibles of humanity. Nothing whatever would be lost to the cause of reasonable religion could it be proved that all Bibles have had a common twofold origin and that they all alike contain the same hidden meanings couched in similar external garbs. The twelve Tribes of Israel bear a close resemblance to the twelve Signs of the Zodiac or Houses of the Sun, and careful reading of Genesis xlix. and Ezekiel xlviii., and several other chapters of the Old Testament containing details concerning the qualities and positions of the twelve Tribes, clearly connect the narratives with definite astrological teaching.

When Jacob blesses his twelve sons on his physical death-bed he describes the dominant characteristics of twelve varieties of persons easily encountered among ourselves to-day, and when these twelve varieties of people are grouped in other narrations in four divisions of three each, we find the four trigons or triplicities—fiery, airy, watery, earthy—very definitely segregated.

In a profane zodiac there is a Scorpion but no Eagle, while in a sacred zodiac there is an Eagle but

no Scorpion. The old Dragon, who is ultimately to disappear, is the Satan who is to be transformed into Lucifer, a type of the sense-nature of humanity which is to be uplifted by a transmutative process till carnality has given place to spirituality. The signs in the sun, moon and stars which are to presage the ending of a dispensation and the commencement of a new age are unmistakably astrological allusions, and the same is obviously true in connection with Herod enquiring diligently of the Wise Men at what time a certain star appeared in a specific section of the heavens. If the devout Jew insists (as he well may) upon the fact that the pure monotheistic faith of Israel as set forth by the greatest of the prophets never countenanced Chaldean or Babylonian astrology, the reply may reasonably be offered that the seers of every age and land have protested vigorously against idolatrous accretions but not against the pure essence of the Ancient Sabean or any other religion and philosophy founded in Nature itself and susceptible of scientific demonstration. If astrology and its claims were not so prominently to the front in the modern world we might imagine that the religion of to-morrow would pay no heed to astrology, but present indications point unmistakably to the fact that this ancient

doctrine cannot be quietly ignored; least of all can it be hissed off the stage by prosecuting astrologers and pronouncing the whole subject unworthy of credence. Persecution always fans the flames of interest and excites sympathy in favour of the persecuted, thus it has already come to pass that the study of astrology has gained immensely in popularity of late, largely owing to the ignorant assaults made upon it by people whose mediæval intellects allow them to suppose that the wisdom of the ancients was benighted folly and that they, and they alone, are the rightful custodians of science, faith and morals.

This age has almost outgrown all such fallacious assumptions and the next step forward can only be a widespread firsthand enquiry into the claims of these venerable beliefs (to call them nothing more) which have survived all attacks upon them through continuous centuries, and, despite all parasitic accretions which need removal, are still giving evidence of amazing and unconquerable vitality.

Theosophical writers are constantly reminding us that there are seven great root-religions each coloured by its own particular Ray, and that each of these originated with a direct impulse from its own Planetary Spirit. One of these great

root-religions, the Chaldean, was emphatically the religion of astrology. Every impartial Bible examiner must sooner or later reach the conclusion that astrology is both commended and condemned in the course of its many pages, but that is inevitable if we only take into account the numerous writers who have contributed to the Bible as it exists to-day and the numberless and varied conditions in which astrology was found at different times and in different countries. The two extremely opposite views of astrology taken by students of the ancient science to-day, and the many half-way houses between extreme fatalism and extreme freewillism occupied by contemporary teachers, serve to show that simply to set up a horoscope and to judge it correctly are often two very different things. To judge a figure requires insight and philosophic acumen, while to erect a horoscope is a mechanical feat easily accomplished if one has access to an ephemeris and knows the meaning of the signs which are the letters of the astrological alphabet. The books known as Daniel, Ezekiel and the Apocalypse are clearly astrological, though they contain also a mystical or esoteric significance. The seven churches of Asia, which were historically centres of initiation into the Mysteries in Asia Minor, are readily recog-

nized by astrologers who have given attention to the positions assigned them by the Revelator under their respective Angels or Planetary Governors. Ephesus was a city dedicated to Artemis the Moon-goddess. Gabriel, who presides over dreams and visions, has always been associated with the Moon. Smyrna was consecrated to the Sun, whose Angel is Michael. Pergamos was dedicated to Jupiter, whose Angel is Zadkiel. Thyatira had been set apart for Venus, whose Angel is Hamiel. Sardis was dedicated to Mars, whose Angel is Chamael. Philadelphia was dedicated to Saturn, concerning whose Angel there has been some discussion, but all agree that originally Saturn denoted patience and perseverance. Laodicea was a city dedicated to Mercury, whose Angel is Raphael. If we read thoughtfully the message of the Spirit to these seven churches through their respective Angels, we shall learn much concerning the qualities and attributes anciently assigned to the Sun, Moon and five Planets—Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn. The remoter planets Uranus and Neptune have never been regarded as exercising so direct an influence on our Earth as the nearer orbs, but we are now coming to appreciate their influence to a considerable degree, and it is stated by the deepest

penetrators into astrologic mysteries to-day that our planet is becoming increasingly susceptible to the radiant emanations streaming through space from these powerful centres of energy.

The worthy claim made by heroic teachers of the gospel of possible human victory over all extraneous influences by no means contradicts astrology, for far from denying the actual existence of various planetary influences, it wisely assures us that though at first foolish or inexperienced and, therefore, subject to the sway of all around us, we can rise to such sublime altitudes of spiritual attainment that eventually we shall truly become the Wise Men who rule the lunar and planetary elements within our own economy and therefore be said to rule our stars while formerly we perforce obeyed them.

CHAPTER IV

NATURAL AND REVEALED RELIGION—GOD IN NATURE AND IN GRACE

BETWEEN Natural and Revealed Religion (so called) there is said to be so wide a difference that while the former is natural to all humanity, even in very primitive estates, the latter is unknowable except when some special revelation has been made either through the agency of special revelators or through the medium of some specially inspired book or books. It is extremely difficult to decide exactly what is meant by revelation as something apart altogether from discovery, because the two words in scientific and philosophical circles are often employed interchangeably ; it is only among dogmatic theologians that they are persistently treated as connoting definitely opposed ideas. We may speak of a revelation as being made through nature and at the same time clearly convey the thought that there is real communion between Deity and Humanity through a divinely appointed natural medium ; it

therefore cannot necessarily follow that a revelation from Heaven must be through a supernatural agency, and indeed it may be fairly argued that the word supernatural is one of extremely doubtful import. We cannot claim to decide if any event actually transcends Nature without first satisfying ourselves that we are fully acquainted with Nature as a whole, and where, we may well enquire, is the rational mind that claims to be in full possession of knowledge covering the whole of Nature's limitless domain ?

Modern criticism of Sacred Books compels the admission that we have positively no actual evidence that they were written differently from other kinds of literature ; indeed there is much in the world's most widely venerated Bibles which proves them to be so nearly related to much that is avowedly secular that it is often practically impossible to discriminate reasonably between a sacred story and a simply secular anecdote. To claim that we have definite knowledge of the supernatural is to boast of far more than we can prove, and in the interest of reasonable religion it is highly desirable that all such bewildering claims should be abandoned and the subject of Divine Revelation be viewed rationally.

"The heavens declare the glory of God" is surely a declaration of natural religion, yet the 19th Psalm, which opens with it, is included in sacred literature, and it is to that psalm that Thomas Paine turned with high appreciation in his "Age of Reason" when he was endeavouring sharply to contrast natural religion and fabulous theology. Without by any means agreeing *in toto* with Paine, Volney, Voltaire, or any of the other Natural Deists of the eighteenth century, we can surely find much to admire in their straightforward determination to stand up for truth as they perceived it, despite all the persecution and antagonism mercilessly levelled against them, and while it would not be true to say that the best thought of to-day is identical with their conclusions, there are many striking indications that the world is moving forward toward a conception of religion which finds room for Naturalism and also for Spiritualism. Though the term Spiritualist is now almost exclusively applied to those who make spirit-communion the foundation or corner-stone of their system, the older definition of Spiritualist included all who claimed that there was some definite revelation of a spiritual universe made by communicating entities who mysteriously appeared and disappeared among

men and who were usually designated Angels, a word simply signifying minister or messenger.

"No man has seen God at any time" is an unmistakable scriptural declaration that the Eternal Infinite is entirely beyond human faculty to limit. As James Freeman Clarke, one of America's most enlightened religious leaders, was wont to say, we may apprehend but we cannot possibly comprehend Deity, consequently no reasonable mind has ever attempted to prove that there has ever been any direct external communion between men and God except through intermediation, sometimes by means of an interior voice and vision and at other times through the agency of celestial messengers. No account of revelation is incredible in the light of modern knowledge, even if we persist in taking all records literally, on account of the rapidly increasing accumulation of evidence to the reality of psychic phenomena including even spirit materialization. There have always been, as there still are, two distinctly opposite classes of human temperaments to which different types of evidence respectively appeal. One of these classes demands objective proof, and therefore attaches much importance to what are often termed Nature Miracles; the other class cares nothing for such alleged

occurrences and is indeed disposed to treat them with scant courtesy, when not with actual scorn. The stickler for Revealed Religion in its narrower theological significance vainly imagines that he glorifies God by insisting that special manifestations of extra-natural character are essential to a demonstration of Divine Sovereignty, but in the light of the modern idea of immanence as inseparably united with transcendence such a puerile concept excites scepticism far more than it strengthens faith. Henry Drummond was undoubtedly one of the pioneers of the most reverent type of Modernism ; his remarkably popular book "Natural Law in the Spiritual World" was pronounced "almost a revelation," because it took the reader into a domain of religious thought widely separated from the narrow orthodoxy which had survived as a relic of Medievalism, and is even still regarded in some backward quarters as the only kind of theology which duly honours the idea of Deity.

When it is once for all conceded that, as Drummond so truly emphasized in his later works, God is not to be looked for in gaps or interstices, but in the orderly operation of the course of the Universe, the last vestige of belief in the necessity for the old idea of the supernatural as a support for

Theism will have been abandoned. Theodore Parker and other deeply spiritual religious leaders discarded supernaturalism because they felt it to be a shutting out of the thought of Deity as immanent as well as transcendent. The word Grace as employed by theologians of the dogmatic schools usually applies to a reception of special blessings through sacramental agencies, so much so indeed that the most extravagant and irrational claims have been made for the mediation of priestly ministries, in some instances so far obscuring, if not positively denying, the immediate operation of the Holy Spirit in the individual soul as to lead to Quakerism and other similar mystical systems of religion which have utterly discarded sacramental ordinances and reduced (or elevated) the idea of communion with Deity entirely to an interior individual process.

As channels of GRACE sacraments have always been supremely esteemed among sacerdotalists, who regard them as divinely appointed means for securing actual communion with Heaven, and it must be admitted that many sincerely pious souls find in them great inspiration and consolation. The trend of truly expansive religious thought can never be toward denial of actual spiritual experiences of any sort, but, on the contrary, ever in the

direction of finding more and more avenues through which heavenly influences may reach the aspiring spirit. It is not, therefore, because the universal religionist disclaims sacramental efficacy that he often seems to brush sacred ordinances aside, but because he feels intensely that no external channel can ever be imperatively necessary. We find among Oriental peoples quite as much regard for sacred usages as we discover among Catholic Christians and in Theosophical literature we find the claims very well substantiated. The seven Sacrament known and honoured in Christendom have all their roots deeply planted in the ancient soil of pre-Christian observances, and there is not a word in the New Testament to infer that the earliest Christians ever imagined that their Master had instituted actually new rites ; he had only infused old practices with new life and meaning. Baptism is a means of initiation into a spiritual society, and its equivalent has been venerated throughout the ages among Gnostics, Mystics, Occultists and all others who have employed water as a channel of spiritual force as well as a symbol of purification. The Holy Supper is in its Christian form a successor to the Jewish Paschal feast, and it has also many links of connection with Oriental celebrations. The other

five sacraments—Marriage, Holy Orders, Penance, Extreme Unction, and Confirmation—are equally ancient, and also universal in many of their aspects, and all can be traced to periods long antedating the birth of either Judaism or Christianity. The devoutest and most orthodox of Christians, if he is in any degree acquainted with primitive Church history, knows full well that the ablest fathers of the Church never disguised the fact that Christianity had adopted and adapted many usages extant in the Roman Empire, as it afterwards took possession of pagan temples and rededicated them, often with as few alterations in names and rituals as could be allowed, so as not to needlessly shock or estrange those who had been long devoted to the ancient faiths and practices. If one believes all pre-Christian doctrines and ceremonies, except the Jewish, to have been either false or meaningless, then such a course as that pursued by early Christianisers must appear wholly reprehensible; but if we concede (as we rightly may) that there was originally genuine vitality in the ancient cults, and that their spirituality had simply become overclouded by sensualism, we can readily justify the course of those adopters and adapters of such material as they found ready to hand in all cases

where those who employed the extant material were sincere well-wishers to humanity, and not time-serving hypocrites who cared merely for their own sway over the minds of converts.

The efficacy of sacraments and their equivalents must depend very largely upon the intention of sacramentalists, both priests and laity, because high spiritual results are only obtainable when necessary spiritual requirements are fully met.

The Church of England in one of its Thirty-nine Articles has declared that the unworthiness of a minister does not invalidate the efficacy of a sacrament, and that is undoubtedly true to a certain extent, though in part only.

Theologians often lay great stress upon the will to consecrate, and affirm that will is essential to consecrational efficacy. This is the aspect of the question as it affects the consecrator only; from the standpoint of the receiver of a sacrament we are compelled to consider receptivity. Worthy and unworthy receptions must mean essentially receptions when in and out of the state of grace, but what constitutes a state of grace is sometimes a matter of heated controversy.

The Common Prayer Book of the Anglican and American Episcopal Church lays rightful stress on

love and charity to our neighbours and intent to lead a new and purer life. The wretched Kikuyu Controversy which greatly agitated Episcopal circles in the early part of 1914 was brought about entirely by sacerdotalists in South Africa unduly emphasizing what many denominations of Christians regard as non-essential, and though it seems harsh to say it when we remember how many excellent people are ardent sacerdotalists, we deem that common honesty compels the assertion that high Ritualists are so overweeningly imbued with sacerdotal claims that they overlook most mischievously far weightier considerations than those they most vigorously emphasize.

Pure religion is a matter of the affections far more than of the intellect, and least of all does it depend upon whether a person has undergone an outward ceremony or not. If it be deemed essential to erect and maintain barriers which are like Chinese walls of exclusion against the incursion of dreaded Tartars, then to emphasize externals is inevitable ; but if the aim of truly religious people is to elevate the tone of human society in general and contribute toward the advent of a reign of universal peace, then to emphasize externals unduly is to place a formidable drawback.

If any attention is to be paid to the magnificent prophetic declaration "Man looketh at the outward appearance, but GOD looketh at the heart" we may well side with those who confidently predict that the religion of to-morrow, while not discarding any rites and ceremonies that people find spiritually helpful, will lay much more stress upon what those observances typify than upon any restrictive disciplinary rules concerning their administration. Individual latitude must be allowed in ever-increasing measure as individual intelligence expands, and we cannot expect that rationally minded people, who are also sincerely devout as to their aspirations, will allow themselves to be hampered and fettered in the gratification of legitimate spiritual impulses by the dictation of zealots whose zeal far outruns discretion. Organized religion suffers unutterably from the constant wrangling over matters which must be left more and more to individual discretion. There are unquestionably large numbers of earnest men, women and children who derive great spiritual help from widely venerated outward religious observances, and there are undoubtedly many more who feel that those same outward observances are hindrances rather than assistances, chiefly owing to their inability to

connect spirit with letter in any definitely satisfactory manner.

For all who are desirous of getting hold of something like a scientific view of religious rites it may be helpful to study rationally a world-wide theory of consecration founded in a perception of the closeness of the spiritual realm to our usually unsuspecting physical susceptibilities. Magic, though a word of profane import in the ears of many Western religionists, has a very high significance all over the Orient despite the fact that Magic may be either Black or White, and many shades between. Magic when regarded as the famous *Magnum Opus* of the Alchemists is something immeasurably greater than the uninitiated multitude can suppose, and consequently when Tolstoi spoke of sacraments as magical, and thereby incurred the detestation of the fanatical priests of the Græco-Russian Church, he did not really use an irrelevant or irreverent expression. Annie Besant in many of her published writings has presented the Theosophical view of sacraments very clearly and helpfully by calling attention to the importance and significance of mantras which are actually untranslatable in their entirety because of it being necessary always to employ exactly the same form

of words to induce the same vibration. The fundamental of a sacrament is unchangeable, and accordingly we find insistence laid upon exact conformity to long-established uses wherever the dignity of sacraments is upheld.

There is always one sacrament which occupies a supreme place in every sacramental system which, like the Christian Eucharist, can be received perpetually, while other sacraments, like the equally universal rite of baptism, can be received once for all. A change is said by Occultists to be wrought in the inner substance of consecrated elements though no change has been made in the accidentals. Martin Luther taught a doctrine of consubstantiation in distinction from transubstantiation which is still widely held among Lutherans; this doctrine accords fairly well with the generally received theosophical opinion concerning alterations in "astral matter."

Whatever may be the precise view entertained concerning *modus operandi*, or however much mystery, and even uncertainty, may attach to doctrinal theories, it must be admitted that as means of enforcing the prime idea of spiritual unity, sacraments are of extreme value, for without such bonds it would prove almost impossible to hold religious

communities together at all. It is undeniably true that nothing short of concrete expressions of spiritual ideas can satisfy the demands of many ardent souls who seem unable to grasp what are to them vague and abstract ideas, consequently they must have a means of approach to Deity through a regulated system which they believe to be of divine appointment; furthermore such souls need a vivid and continual sense of spiritual companionship together with the fascination of a sacramental mystery. We know that all this seems childish and even materialistic to some interior mystics who can more readily follow Jacob Boehme than Cardinal Newman, and who would find themselves much more in accord with Quakerism than with Ritualism, but we must make all due allowance for temperamental differences and seek to understand rather than to criticize the emotional life of those of our neighbours whose requirements are by no means identical with our own. The greatest obstacle of all in the way of realizing religious harmony is the pertinacious tenacity with which so many people cling to exclusiveness where inclusiveness is the greatest need. There is so much unholy jealousy masquerading as piety, so much love of power and of self, so much religious class-consciousness im-

peding the path to spiritual unity that it seems hopeless to attempt to immediately establish the idea of universal religion anywhere except among a broad-minded and enlightened few who must act as protagonists and propagandists but in no sense become proselytizers. No such word as toleration must be allowed in our vocabulary, for the instant that we feel that we either tolerate or are tolerated all sense of comradeship has evaporated.

Where there is sympathy and mutual esteem no arrogant claims for special rights or peculiar privileges can ever be set up ; it therefore clearly follows that whenever we even think of tolerating others, or of being tolerated by them, we assert the greater right of some and the lesser right of others. Condescension and patronage can never go hand in hand with true brotherly and sisterly affection. But, says the stickler for aggressive churchmanship, we consider our institution to be divinely appointed while our neighbours' institutions are only man-made, and we should prove disloyal to our most sacred trusts did we concede to our separated brethren their claim to be equally God's ministers with us. Such an attitude may be entirely sincere but it is pitifully destitute of spiritual

enlightenment because it attributes communicability of divine grace to the employment of artificial and not always accessible channels. We boldly challenge sacerdotalists of the exclusive type to refute our positive affirmation that their own best utterances are against their own exclusiveness, for " baptism by desire " and " spiritual communion " are terms frequently employed by the very persons who insist most upon exterior ceremonial.

The religion of to-morrow may be after all identical with the best type of the earliest Christianity, which may yet be discovered to have been spiritual eclecticism, the farthest possible remove from the assumptiveness of a priesthood which grew up during the reign of Constantine, and subsequently became so dominant that the very persecutions which had been levelled against primitive Christians by Roman Pagans were now levelled by Christians, not only against Pagans, Jews and others, but even against each other as soon as pompous hierarchies in the Church had become sufficiently powerful to enforce their relentless decrees. It was from Roman Paganism, not from any originally Christian sources, that hierarchical pretensions were derived ; we are therefore at no loss whatever to account for the origin of the many rites which seem to bear no

relation whatsoever to the Gospel teachings and which have always been disowned, and often vehemently condemned, by theologians of an extremely protestant and Puritan type. A study of Asiatic religious systems throws great light on European systems because we find so many resemblances between the faiths and practices of Orientals and Occidentals that we can see, almost at a glance, that all religious systems, both on their exoteric and esoteric sides, have maintained a common tradition and are at root practically one.

As India is at present so large and influential a portion of the British Empire it is daily becoming more and more interesting and important to know how to conduct missionary work in that great peninsula where so many different cults are struggling perpetually for supremacy. We must not be carried away by the charm of glamour when we view for the first time the picturesque side of Hindu religious life, for while it has much of beauty it also conceals much that is unlovely. Oriental temples have many charms and also many disfiguring features, and the teachings given by the priests attached to them are of many different hues. It may prove a futile task either to convert natives of India in large numbers to Christianity or actu-

ally to amalgamate Eastern with Western religious creeds and observances, but a truly excellent work is now being done by those who have imbibed the spirit of true theosophy and are not disturbed by bubbles on the surface of a great spiritual ocean of thought and purpose. The ten great religious systems admirably outlined by James Freeman Clarke in his famous standard work on comparative religion, entitled "Ten Great Religions," may never be fused into externally federal unity in the fullest sense, yet there may come about, much sooner than many expect, a spiritual co-operation which does not demand fusion and yet gives ample scope for friendly interrelated activities. It seems inevitable that in the near future, unless some great event transpires of an utterly revolutionary and reconstructive character, that the different religious systems of the world will continue to preserve their respective identities, and they will thus meet the requirements of some considerable portions of the human race; but in addition to these various restricted systems there will arise a far more comprehensive exhibition of institutionalized catholicity than has yet appeared, and that new catholic movement will embrace advanced thinkers who are unfetterable by the limitations

NATURAL AND REVEALED RELIGION 91
of any exclusive cult but can see the good in all systems.

It would be useless for anyone to attempt outwardly to unite with any such organization who was not inwardly convinced that it was a true step forward, for probably many short-sighted persons would consider its extreme comprehensiveness a step backward rather than forward, as numerous persons who think themselves especially liberal and advanced regard anything like ceremonial in religion as a sign of ignorant adhesion to outworn superstitions. There must be no forcing of any honest intellects, and no cramping of the wings of any enthusiastic soarer into ideal and mystic regions, if we are to stand firmly on the basis of spiritual unity, therefore all associations of a religious character must be purely voluntary, in strict accord indeed with the attitude toward individual religious freedom announced in the Constitution of the United States of America. It would greatly shock many varieties of limited people to join in a Communion Service to which were attracted Brahmins, Buddhists, Parsees, Confucians, Jews, Mohammedans and many other technically separated persons, and the protest against such a service would by no means proceed from a solitary

quarter. The professedly orthodox in all the cults would be outraged, and no doubt rivers of ink would be outpoured as libations to conservatism of the separatist type. Denunciations and excommunications would probably follow in many instances and we should hear and read many tirades against apostacy and much else that sounds bad, though it may be only a name given to what is beyond the comprehension of its vehement denouncers.

If men and women must be driven out of special communities because of the bigotry within, then let them go out gladly, feeling that they are indeed called to work as pioneers and free-lances engaged in a mission of larger unification. Religious conflicts are by no means over, and we may reasonably expect to witness fiercer battles over religion than we have yet encountered, though they will no doubt be fought with more civilized weapons than in the past. If we see our way to side resolutely, and once for all, with the advancing tide of spiritual revelation which is rapidly sweeping away all unnecessary barriers, we need not expect to be endorsed by those who cling to what is being undermined. We shall certainly be told that we are religion's foes while claiming to be its friends, and we shall meet no kindlier appreciation from those uncompromising

iconoclasts who esteem all religion a fetter and hope soon to see religion itself exterminated. All these conservative, reactionary and iconoclastic forces must spend their fury in a sharp impending conflict before ground and air are cleared for the wider, freer religion of to-morrow, which will embrace all that is worthy to survive in the many cults extant, and which will also add much of illuminating character to all the material we have now at our disposal to employ. Nothing fights so desperately or yields so reluctantly as exclusiveness, and there is a valid reason for this in the fact that up to a certain point exclusiveness is necessary to conserve ideas in definite forms which would soon evaporate, after their first introduction among humanity, were they not preserved in sacred arks or treasure houses which only gradually develop into sepulchres that tend unduly to confine them. The sacraments of the Christian Church have done much to preserve the thought of the nearness, even of the immanence, of Deity, and are therefore worthy of high regard.

Without the sacramental system many minds incapable of realizing the idea of divine indwelling in a purely spiritual manner would be left desolate of the sense of divine accessibility. If the sacramentalists in Christendom were less exclusive in

their claims and more ready to allow that divine grace can and does flow through other channels in addition to their own, it would be an easy task to foretell the speedy advent of a happy day of rational co-operation between Christian and non-Christian systems. Active preparation for that blissful event is actually being truly made by many of the broader minds in Christendom who are essentially peacemakers, despite the hindrances placed in the way by those who cannot see the reasonableness of the larger view. Compromises and concessions are not demanded, but wider insight is required than usually prevails, to bring about that much-needed unification without which peace must remain impossible. The primal concept of Divine Unity is the common starting point, and, as we have already endeavoured to show, the admission of a multitude of subordinate divinities into our pantheon by no means detracts from this essential concept. Law is one, but there are many operations of law distinctly differing one from the other on varying planes of natural expression. Unity is not destroyed because variety is admitted, and as no finite view of the Universe, which is infinite, can be complete, it should be our constant endeavour to prove the truth of the mighty affirmation that though there are

many stars in every spiritual constellation all are included in the one all-embracing glory. So is it in that galaxy of religious systems which have been established on this planet under superintendence of the Supreme Director ; each is intended to fulfil its distinctive mission till the bright day dawns when all shall melt into manifest as well as into fundamental unity.

CHAPTER V

RELIGION AS A SOCIAL FORCE

THE theological aspect of religion may be disregarded by certain minds, because they may fail to trace any necessary or logical connection between theology and science, but the social or sociological aspects of the religious question can never be rationally ignored, because they bear directly, and with immense force, upon our everyday living. We need not travel far to find religious centres from which dogmatic theology has been virtually evicted and where social science has effectively and energetically taken its place. Institutional Churches are by no means uncommon in some thriving districts, and members of these Churches are devoting noble energies with tireless assiduity to a benevolent and philanthropic work which accords closely with many gospel precepts. We once heard a distinguished preacher in a great church in America say, "It has always been difficult for many

people to know what to believe, but seldom, if ever, has it been hard for those same people to know what to do." When Matthew Arnold insisted that conduct was four-fifths of life he laid emphasis upon a doctrine which appeals with overwhelming force to the typical thinker of to-day, unless he be a natural theologian or casuistical philosopher, in which case he will controvert the statement. But admitting that Arnold was correct, we are still left to enquire what motives will best influence conduct, and we must feel keen interest in all institutions that tend to improve it. What effect has religion on conduct? is then a great and timely query and one which we cannot lightly dismiss. We often hear it said, we are inclined to think sometimes flippantly, "it is no matter what a man believes or whether he is religious or not, provided he lives a good life." This is an easily spoken platitude which contains enough truth to render it plausible but not enough body to render it solid philosophy. The statement baldly uttered may be true, but there is an unsound inference associated with it, viz. that what a person believes, and the religious views he may hold and practise, have practically nothing to do with the kind of life he lives, and this is seldom proved to be the case. Were we to affirm that only in

so far as beliefs and religious practices affect conduct have they any really demonstrable value we might be fully in the right, and that is the exact position taken by the social religionist who eschews dogmatic theology. Mere belief is ethically valueless, but belief translated into action becomes a serious proposition. You may believe anything you like about anybody, and so long as you secrete your belief within your own bosom it is a matter with which no one but yourself can deal, but it is the tendency and habit of beliefs to leak out in words and actions, therefore an unkind or unjust belief entertained in private usually soon springs forth into cruel speech and inhospitable deed, when it instantly becomes a matter of moment in a community. Religious beliefs when they are broad, liberal and spiritual are accustomed to overflow in beneficent ministries and are therefore valuable social assets, while narrow illiberal beliefs generally sprout forth in conduct alien to social welfare.

The average man of to-day is no theologian in the old-fashioned meaning of the word, but he is vitally interested in social problems, and the cause he often assigns for his conspicuous aloofness from all so-called religious work and interests is that he finds nothing in common between avowedly

religious services and actual service rendered to humanity. That there has been a serious cleavage between professedly religious activities and those of a definitely philanthropic nature no diligent observer can deny, and it is for that reason that so much stress is now being laid in so many places upon the seemingly secular side of ecclesiastical activities. Some ecclesiastics may be resorting to what they feel to be a necessary expedient to save their institutions from collapse, therefore there may not be much depth to their active philanthropic exertions, but we are confident that Winston Churchill in his wonderfully powerful novel "*The Inside of the Cup*" has voiced heroic sentiments which are actually animating the breasts of many clergymen of whom his Rev. John Hodder is a noble and not very unusual type. In this author's famous novel we have truly living issues brought prominently home to us in a manner at once lucid and convincing, and we discover that the writer with his remarkably keen insight into causes has shown that his hero did not begin by confronting theological difficulties or taking exception to stereotyped ecclesiastical usages, but was immediately confronted with social and industrial problems which in these days cannot possibly be

long ignored. We are constantly brought face to face with Mr. Hodder's difficulty, which is the alienation of the mass of working people from fashionable religious institutions on account of the commercial dishonesty and heartlessness of men prominent in Church affairs who substitute attendance at places of worship and financial support of them for practical uprightness. Such a bone of contention cannot be disregarded on any plausible plea whatever, because though it may be easy to dismiss doctrinal points on the score of the limitations of the human intellect when confronting the immeasurable mysteries of the universe, questions of practical rectitude confront every one of us in daily life and they present no mystery whatsoever. The religion of the immediate future, if religion is to continue to exist in any organized forms, must be so intensely practical and unmistakably serviceable on its practical side that it will be impossible for any sane lover of social righteousness to complain that the Church is an indifferent force where social integrity is concerned. More and more are thoughtful persons coming to agree in large measure not only with Matthew Arnold but also with Thomas Huxley, who though an avowed agnostic saw in an established Church a possible engine of social righteousness of tremendous

power, provided that Church lived up to its possibilities for conserving and directing energies directly bearing upon our pressing social and industrial problems. A book like "The Call of the Carpenter," which has created a sensation in America, may not set forth theology in terms satisfactory to dogmatic theologians, nevertheless no one can deny that even the most rigid and ritualistic ecclesiastics in England, like Father Dolling and Father Stanton, for example, endeared themselves to multitudes because of the social side of their religion, not on account of its medieval theological aspects. In the case of Pope Pius X many who totally disagreed with his screeds against modernism intensely admired the piety and kindness of the man, who apart from his narrow theology was a most loving and lovable human being. The artistic, æsthetic side of religious worship, together with a mass of venerated tradition, appeals very strongly to the affections and imagination of some upright men and women while it definitely repels others. But practical philanthropy appeals alike to all who have the love of humanity at heart. It cannot be successfully disputed that the ritualistic aspects of Christianity are almost entirely Pagan in origin, and

so are many of the most dearly cherished doctrines to which professedly orthodox persons are still clinging with intense tenacity, but the philanthropic element constituted the especial glory of the primitive Christian Church, which so long as it remained comparatively uncorrupted clung only to the following of its Master in the path of loving-kindness. "See how these Christians love one another" is the great historic testimony to the spiritual influence exerted by primitive Christianity prior to its ultimate demoralization under Constantine. It seems incredible that such a character as that of Constantine should have been so long upheld as one to excite veneration in Christendom, and that the succeeding Roman emperor Julian should have been execrated as an "apostate," when history shows that Julian was by far the nobler character of the two. Constantine was an imperialist determined to twist Christianity into a groove in which he could manipulate it for his self-glorification, while Julian, witnessing the sad condition of the empire as Constantine had left it, sought to restore the older Paganism in the fond hope that a return to the old Roman state religion might effect a change for the better in the general condition of the populace.

The mere fact of employing ancient ceremonies and adapting Pagan temples to Christian worship was not necessarily an error in itself; it was the anti-social and therefore anti-Christian spirit manifested by the manipulators which brought disgrace upon Christianity and gradually led to a cold religious formalism which did next to nothing to elevate the masses who came under its dominion. It is undeniably true that there have always been some stalwart prophets of righteousness who have worked inside as well as outside of dominant ecclesiastical institutions, but these faithful individuals were not the products of the systems with which they were ostensibly connected. They simply used extant machinery and did their best within the limits of the organizations through which they found opportunity to work. A genuine prophet arising in a community professing Mohammedanism would employ the Koran and minister in a mosque if opportunity afforded to reach the people and bring home to them important lessons in practical righteousness. Another prophet, arising in a Jewish community, would find a pulpit in a synagogue and he would take his texts from Torah and Haphtarrah, enforcing the same great moral lessons as his Mussulman confrère. Again,

another prophet, arising among the native populations of India, would quote from Upanishads and Gita, but he would enforce the same essential doctrine as that taught by the two others we have instanced as working in different communities. Primitive Christianity was a tremendous social force and its sacramental system lent itself with complete readiness to the fulfilment of the highest and most universal social ideal. Even when a heavy cloud hung over the sanctuary and institutionalized Christianity had sunk to the lowest material ebb, the mode of administering sacraments served to keep alive, at least to some extent, the original ideal, for the lord and the servant received holy communion at the same altar and in the same kneeling posture.

In baptism also the same essential ceremony was performed whether the infant was the child of a princess or of a peasant woman, the only difference being in accidental accompaniments. True religion of any kind is a levelling up force, never a levelling down process. The humblest and poorest, equally with the highest and wealthiest, are entitled to its most sacred ministrations, and for that cause we are justified in affirming, without compromise or mental reservation of any sort, that

when the essence of religion is filtered out and its undesirable attachments discarded it will be found provocative and preservative of the highest social ideals. *Gettogetherness* expresses the spirit of the best type of contemporary religious activity. This is no new tocsin, no novel call of the twentieth century, it is the oldest as well as the newest cry of the human spirit answering to the pleading of the Divine. "They were all assembled with one accord in one place" and "they had all their goods in common" are very familiar quotations from the Acts of the Apostles. To have all our goods in common does not necessarily mean the abrogation of personal property, but it does mean that members of a holy community all have a share in the general exchequer, and most of all that the spiritual benefits enjoyed by some are shared by all. Questions of actual personal belongings may be open for much discussion, but it is coming to be extensively realized that though the world does not actually owe every individual a ready-made living, society organized must see to it that every one has an opportunity for earning an honest living.

Many mistakes are made by extremists along all lines and we need to deal cautiously with intricate and perplexing problems involving manifold inter-

ests, but there can be no two opinions among real thinkers concerning the need for readjustment along many social and industrial lines ; and if the Church is to be a power for righteousness in any community it must not be a "dumb dog" or an evasive force, but a clearly outspoken voice leading the world on the path of righteousness. When burning questions arise in these days, people often feel that Church dignitaries speak and write timidly or in uncertain tones when their sympathies clearly incline toward human rights and liberties, and in other instances they are clearly on the side of the continued oppression of the masses.

No religious body can espouse the cause of injustice, or even gloss over flagrant inequity, and be a power for good in a community, for in such a plight it must either be blind or hypocritical. It is to the stage and to the novel, rather than to the pulpit, that many people are now turning for their practical religion, and popular preachers could easily do worse than preach upon good plays and good romances which set forth high ethical ideals. Such a story as "*The Servant in the House*," by Kennedy, represents the Church of to-day exactly as it is, taking fairly into account the various and extremely contradictory elements it embodies. The

two bishops represent extremes, and probably the average *episcopus* is not so saintly as the one and by no means so unscrupulous as the other ; but the clergyman who takes off his cassock and follows the working-man (his own brother) into the sewer under the church for the sole purpose of putting an end to festering corruption, is doubtless true to the life in many instances. Jerome's magnificent tale "The Passing of the Third Floor Back" expresses the highest conceivable idea of prophetic ministry, and as the playwright is a man-about-town rather than a recluse or an ascetic, his splendid tribute to the latent goodness in our common humanity is overwhelmingly convincing. We go to the theatre and we read the book of the play and then ask ourselves if a dramatist or novelist is capable of thinking out or dreaming out a tribute to human nature transcending its reality.

Here we confront the crux of the entire situation. We go to another theatre and read another play, "Joseph and His Brethren," and there we find the scene laid in ancient Egypt instead of in modern England and the characters taken from the Old Testament instead of from contemporary life, but the lessons are the same and the tribute to essential goodness identical. "Behold the dreamer cometh"

may be quoted from Genesis and may refer to a man who lived several thousand years ago or it may be spoken of Nikola Tesla or some other modern electrician ; the facts are the same in both instances no matter how remote in time the one character may be from the other. The seer, visionary or prophet turns out to be the practical philanthropist and most successful man of affairs. All things must be put to the test of the higher expediency. We must not be afraid of pragmatism or utilitarianism and imagine that it is unspiritual and irreligious when in reality it is of the essence of deep spirituality and of pure and undefiled religion. Professor William James of Harvard University (U.S.A.) in his later days was a confessed pragmatist (another name for utilitarian), but he was a deeply spiritual and fervently religious man as well as a profound and practical psychologist. Those who adversely criticize the pragmatic position on the plea that it is materialistic and time-serving, politic rather than ethical, are not practically familiar with the highest gospel implications. " Judge the tree by its fruits " is an admonition all too little heeded by contentious hair-splitting theorists, who are such great sticklers for a literal religiosity and a technical theology that they overlook the fundamentals of

pure religion. If a "dreamer" can save a land from famine by his sagacious foresight and insight, then he is surely the most practical of statesmen, and the fact that he is endowed with interior vision and can interpret dreams and do much else that appears magical and mystical does but add to his practical efficiency. If a stranger can come into a modern boarding-house and effect a change for the better in the character and conduct of all its inmates we are not left in doubt as to the value of that stranger's influence for good in a community. If in times of war we can be led to so prepare for peace that bloodshed is averted and needless hostilities brought to a close, the arbitratative peacemaker who comes among us and does us so great and beneficent a service is surely amply armed with satisfactory spiritual credentials. If strikes and lock-outs are demoralizing business and bringing inestimable misery upon countless individuals and families, any man, woman or institution who can end the dispute in such a way as to prevent further needless suffering and establish commerce on a sounder and juster foundation is proved a prophet of righteousness whose benign influence cannot be a matter of dispute. The religion of to-morrow, whatever particular and incidentally differing forms

it may assume, and whatever specific agencies it may employ, must be before all else thoroughly and unmistakably practical.

Theological dogmatism has failed ; every variety of narrow pretentious sectarianism has proved itself inadequate to minister efficiently to present needs. We now await the larger revelation, the fuller gospel, the practical religious ministry which will both talk and work, preach and practise, and so graciously minister to our varied human necessities that it will brighten and sweeten our daily lives, remove our crying abuses, render further warfare between professedly civilized nations impossible, and indeed build upon earth a replica of some celestial city. "May the will of God be done on earth as in heaven" is a beautiful time-honoured aspiration, and it is for us to so do it, not merely pray that it may be done or simply believe that it will be done in some age to come. We can all set to work to do it now in the one simple all-effective manner of intelligent co-operative industry. As we contemplate the march of the constellations, as did the psalmist of ancient Israel, we can well base much of our theology on astronomy as did our predecessors in ages long gone by, and at the same time turn from the starry record external to us to the

living witness within. Nature within and nature without are ever truly in accord, and as genuine religion must be founded in harmony, wholeness, symmetry, it is only as we frame and conduct our institutions in harmony with universal order that we can rationally or spiritually justify their existence.

CHAPTER VI

RELIGION AND PEACE—RELIGION AS A PEACEMAKER

"THE mission of Israel is Peace" was the glorious legend inscribed upon Jewish banners in days of old and it is still regarded as truly characteristic of the faith and aims of Israel. "The Prince of Peace" is a title Christians never tire of ascribing to the Master whom they acknowledge as Messiah. Yet despite these pacific proclamations it cannot be denied that in the names of Judaism and Christianity, as well as in those of other great religions, war has frequently been justified and soldiers and weapons of warfare have received prelatrical consecration. To dedicate a battleship with religious exercises strikes the peace-loving onlooker as both sacrilegious and inconsistent in the extreme, yet the plea is often put forward that the ends of justice can only be served by strife between nations, therefore war is pronounced righteous and necessary, not simply justifiable. When the terrible war which

has so recently convulsed Europe broke forth like a bolt from the blue during the summer of 1914, it was at a time when many sincerely and devoutly religious communities as well as individuals had decided that war in civilized countries had gone by forever. This noble and entirely reasonable sentiment and conviction was, and is, truly commendable and also completely true from the standpoint of the kind-hearted and enlightened men and women who entertain it ; but there were, and still are, other and less civilized influences at work trending in diametrically opposite directions, and these for the time being have come prominently to the front, causing an eruption of belligerence through a sharp collision between contending psychic forces moving powerfully in opposite directions. A psychological study of Peace and War in connection with religious ideas and ideals throws much light upon the essential difference between the religious concepts not only of different religious denominations, but between different members of the same external folds. Pope Pius X was an ardent lover of peace and it was freely stated at the time of his passing that the war had probably shortened his earthly days, but there have been other occupants of the Papal Chair whose sentiments and wishes were by

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no means so pacific though their avowed theology was in no way dissimilar. It cannot be effectually denied that every religious institution, like all Sacred Books, contains elements of doctrine easily translatable either in terms of peace or war according to the temperament of the translator ; and in these days when comparative religion is a very popular subject of study we are brought face to face with world-wide examples of this fact. All Bibles contain exoteric and esoteric elements ; the exoteric lending themselves readily to advocacy of warfare while the esoteric lead entirely into the ways of peace.

We all know how the letter of the Pentateuch reeks with admonitions to slaughter ; how warfare is insisted upon by alleged command of Heaven, yet the kabbalistic interpreter of the Torah finds only counsels for conquering animal propensities and fighting against enemies within ourselves which war against the higher promptings of our divinely derived nature.

In like manner students of that celebrated Hindu poem "Bhagavad Gita" can find Krishna literally counselling his disciple Arjuna to go on fighting till every enemy is slain. If the reader be materialistic, superficial and pugilistic in tendency he will instantly refer to the ancient wars of India

and point to the Gita as counselling extermination of national enemies; but if he be a spiritually minded student with a somewhat mystical trend of thought, he will at once perceive that the warfare counselled by Krishna is of an entirely interior and spiritual character. Precisely the same remark applies to Swedenborg's interpretation of the so-called imprecatory psalms, in which the psalmist prays for the utter destruction of his enemies, which the seer of Scandinavia declared to be no supplication for any curse or blight to fall upon actual human beings, but, on the contrary, he esteemed it a righteous prayer for the complete extirpation of all those lusts and passions which were personified in a vivid poem, against which the spiritual warrior must struggle manfully till he has won the well-fought day.

Turning to the New Testament and the allusions to warfare made by the Master in the gospels, we find the saying "Think not that I am come to bring peace; I am not come to bring peace, but a sword." Then follows the perplexing reference to disagreements in families, members being set at mutual variance. Another striking saying reads: "It must needs be that offences come, but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh." Then we

have the counsel to sell our garments, if need be, for the purpose of obtaining necessary swords ; the declaration that two swords suffice ; and then the command to Peter, " Put thy sword into its sheath, for they who take the sword shall perish by the sword." In these several passages we must either find flagrant discord or else we must thoughtfully consider a figurative and interior mode of interpretation which agrees with the general kabalistic or correspondential method of elucidation, and it is a consideration of the latter only which promises to afford any profitable instruction. But even obviously and literally it seems fairly clear, if we are students of history, that offences often come by the proclamation of truth and the introduction of reforms wherever entrenched error is determined to resist the innovations. We cannot righteously submit to the perpetuation of every form of iniquity which may be established in a nation or community because we know that to attack a flagrant wrong will arouse violent opposition on the part of those who have vested interests in its perpetuation. The offence comes because two interests clash, and neither will give in to the other. All conflicts have not a righteous base, but many wars have been waged on one side in the interests of human

freedom and on the other for the perpetuation of tyranny and slavery. War is a terrible and barbaric method of settling differences, and it could not occur if true civilization were already established ; but so long as barbaric impulses lurk below the veneer of apparent civilization, bloodshed on the battlefield cannot be impossible.

When we contemplate the ethics of the gospel and consider the spiritual counsels given to disciples, who are told that two swords are sufficient at all times and that the use of a carnal weapon is (in their hands) indefensible, we can easily think of two swords, or of the kindred expression "a two-edged sword," as referring to moral suasion and intellectual appeal. Civilized human beings are amenable to addresses made to their consciousness both morally and intellectually. In order that any truth be adequately revealed and accepted, it must convince both reason and conscience ; we must feel that the course proposed is both honourable and rational. The truly spiritual missionary goes not forth with sword to slay, he would indeed far rather be slain himself than shed another's blood, but he carries the sword of the spirit, the word of truth, and this mystical two-edged sword cuts through the errors of darkened and misguided intellect and also

appeals to the deepest affections of our nature. There are always at least a few men and women who can tread as well as see the more excellent way, and while they do not condemn their less enlightened neighbours who brandish carnal weapons in the cause of what they feel to be righteousness, they must themselves refrain from all participation in bloody conflict and exert a potent influence on the side of right in silent and supremely effective ways beyond all carnal knowledge.

It seems incredible that people can really believe in the efficacy of spiritual force and methods and still cling to barbaric usages with which spiritual measures can have no part. Occultists and mystics are strangely inconsistent if while boasting of the efficacy of silent esoteric forces and methods, they still advocate aggressive methods which must inevitably eventuate in exterior conflicts. The bad old saying "in time of peace prepare for war" has borne its desolating effects to the knowledge of us all; it is now surely the duty and privilege of all who have any truly spiritual consciousness to insist upon the opposite, and to practise as well as preach IN TIME OF WAR PREPARE FOR PEACE, and if we inwardly prepare for it we shall certainly outwardly obtain it.

Metaphysical theories concerning the power of thought have been proved fully accurate through the breaking forth of open hostilities between nations fully armed for conflict. Whatever pacifists may have believed and hoped for, it stood to reason from the metaphysical viewpoint that elaborate and very costly military preparations could only result in war. Nations cannot go on indefinitely preparing for war and live in perpetual peace, because the immense volume of thought-force expended in military preparations is ever tending toward the materializing of the event prepared for, even though but comparatively few persons in a great nation may either actually hope for it or definitely expect it. The persistent action of a large multitude of American citizens at a time when newspapers were filled with war news and the Stock Exchange in New York was greatly disturbed in consequence of European belligerence was wholly commendable, though, as Dr. Frank Crane and other distinguished journalists pointed out convincingly, a lasting peace between nations cannot be established merely through the agency of sweet sentimentality ; there must be a definite peace programme formulated, for peace, to abide, must rest upon a rational as well as upon an emotional foundation. The pilgrimage to

Grant's tomb in New York City on Sunday, September 27, 1914, was a memorable event and voiced a noble ideal, so did the celebration of Peace Sunday a week later (October 4) all over the United States, and it would be traitorous to all faith in spiritual agencies to deny, or even doubt, that such celebrations can exert an enormous influence for good on the world's thought-atmosphere. To pray for peace, if we ardently desire it and also confidently expect it, is rational even as it is spiritual ; but there was truth also in the peculiar views expressed by the famous authors who astonished many readers by declaring that peace would be a calamity rather than a blessing if obtained prematurely.

Among the most important and interesting of the gifted men who advocated war within certain limits was the Rev. Holden Sampson, whose works on mystical subjects have attracted wide attention in many places. War, according to this unusual interpreter of theology on a mystical foundation, is a necessary scourge ; a rod in the hands of higher intelligences than ourselves who, so to speak, have sometimes to perform surgical operations on the collective human body, and while these operations may excite fear and cause immediate suffering they are all ulti-

mately beneficial and lead up to a truly healthy and peaceful estate of humanity which could never be attained by palliative or suppressive measures. Another aspect of the war problem presented by Sampson and other mystics is that we often attach far too much importance to merely physical existence and evince grossly materialistic tendencies when we regard a sudden casting off of the material body as an irremediable calamity. We sometimes need to be reminded of the thrilling words "Have no fear of those who can kill the body, for that is all they can do."

That war brings forth heroism and acts as a drastic purgative no observer of human history can effectually deny; but it may well be asked, are we to remain so barbaric that we shall not outgrow the need for these savage cleansing processes? The only reasonable reply to this oft-repeated query is that it rests with ourselves. There is solid comfort to be derived from the grand old words of an often adversely criticized scripture "Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth." The necessity for these severe purifying measures is, of course, presupposed, otherwise the element of love would necessarily be absent from the

heroic measures employed by the chastener. To scourge is only a longer form of the verb to scour, and to scour never means other than to cleanse or purify. Above the din and smoke and all the appalling horrors of a battlefield we need to realize the overbrooding of celestial helpers of humanity who represent the "Divinity which shapes our ends, rough-hew them how we will." Our view-point on earth is at best extremely limited and it can never mitigate, but must greatly exaggerate, suffering to deny that a benevolent end may be accomplished through its agency. To cause needless suffering is self-evidently to revolt against the promptings of all we call "our better self," but to permit humanity to work out its own self-conscious spiritual evolution through repeated and ferocious conflict may be, in the judgment of hosts of beings far wiser than we are, the most effective means for producing ultimately the highest type of humanity.

All conditions have to be taken into account before we can fairly judge any situation, thus though it is surely the part of pure and undefiled religion to promote peace, we need to learn that peace is a product, and not until we have cultivated the two main essentials of universal religion—philanthropy and purity—can peace be made manifest. The

prophets of ancient Israel cried woe upon those who shouted "peace, peace," in the presence of gross injustice which needed to be uprooted. Therefore we must not be hasty in finding fault with modern prophets who see in what they believe to be a justifiable war a needed means for purifying a corrupted society. Motive always, in a spiritual reckoning, takes precedence over speech and action in dignity as it must in order of development, and wherever the predominating motive is to secure equity or put down oppression we have no right to condemn the conduct which grows out of that motive, however much we may seek to expedite the end of conflict. But though we should exercise extreme caution before attempting to pass judgment upon the merit or demerit of any particular battle, it is safe to say that even the most justifiable of wars are not wholly exempt from criticism as concerns the motives which prompted and continued them. National honour is always a phrase to conjure with, and it expresses a truly sacred ideal, but do not pride and ambition often masquerade as honour, and are we not very apt to mistake the one for the other? War is irreligious in the extreme if religion truly means that which binds together individuals and nations; yet it is possible that exception may

be taken to this seemingly self-evident proposition on the ground that the result of a war may be to bind together in amity many who aforetime were belligerents. Abraham Lincoln at the time of the American Civil War aimed at saving the Union before all else, and the war saved it, but we are not prepared to say that it could not have been saved without bloodshed. Looking backward and looking forward are widely different processes. Our forward glances are prophetic and show us what will assuredly come to pass when we have reached a higher stage in evolution than we have yet attained, while our backward glancings can only reveal to us what did occur in an earlier day, before it was possible to fully actualize ideals which may now be capable of externalization. **IN TIME OF WAR PREPARE FOR PEACE** is a motto which all truly spiritually-minded persons can conscientiously adopt, and most of all must we seek to carry this sublime inculcation into effect in our individual lives regardless of what fierce commotions may be raging all around us. We need all to realize that peace and rest cannot be stated in terms of either negation or compromise. Peace is not neutrality but something immeasurably nobler ; it is nothing less than harmonic federation in which nations as well as individuals work

together, each as a contributing factor to the rendering of an intercommunal and international symphony. Rest is not cessation from work, but a blissful condition in which all work is welcome, peaceful, joyous.

True religion and peace are inseparable. "Blessed are the peacemakers" is a beatitude often quoted and verbally accepted but seldom wrought out in actual practice. To keep the peace where it already exists is comparatively easy, even though it often calls for considerable self-restraint; but to make peace where it does not exist and never has existed must prove a far more difficult and arduous undertaking for all save the comparatively few whose own condition is so pacific that they radiate peace-making effluence. Lilian Whiting, in her beautiful book "*The Life Radiant*," shows to a large extent how radiation is spontaneous. The flowers exhale their fragrance just as they do because they are precisely what they are, and were they anything else they could not give forth what they now dispense. "Let your light shine" suggests no struggling, no forcing, no straining after effects, but simply a natural outgoing of radiant emanation. A peacemaker is not a professional agitator who shrieks against war and belligerently counsels peace, but

one whose atmosphere breathes peace. To make peace requires a pacific auric belt or human atmosphere, and this is built up continually by peaceful thought. It is a wonderful triumph of soul over sense to be permanently peaceful while fighting is going on around you, but if any are to be the light of the world and the salt of the earth in any truly effective measure they must attain to that standard. War is very infectious, but peace is equally infectious. Persons who are easily swayed can be influenced quite as readily in a peaceful as in a tumultuous direction, but that is the one specially helpful truth which is generally denied. We all know from observation that the war fever is very catching, but the antidote is equally so, only the antidote is but seldom proffered.

Recruits are drummed up for war ; bands play and flags fly and multitudes hurrah, but where are the recruiting officers who call the susceptible into the Peace Army with anything like the same inducements ? Even in war-time someone must till the soil and engage in peaceful industries or starvation must ensue. Workers are not shirkers, and while some may hear the call to buckle on a soldier's uniform and prepare to fight the enemy, others no less valiant may feel that

they have been summoned to render a different kind of service. In domestic life religion should be the peacemaker at all times, but sadly often it is made an excuse for strife, and when it is so travestied we had better do away with it, for no religion is far better than a religiosity which makes what should be a peaceful home a nest of contentious hornets. "By their fruits ye shall know them." Peace is the final test. The religion of to-morrow must be able and ready to supply it.

CHAPTER VII

ONE RELIGION AND DIVERS RELIGIOUS SYSTEMS AS SUGGESTED BY THE RAINBOW

As this is the seventh chapter of the book we deem it permissible to dwell particularly in this essay upon a famous saying often quoted by students of Comparative Religion : "Religion is one ; but its parts are many." Max Müller, who translated and edited the Sacred Books of the East at a time when the English-speaking world was far less generally or deeply interested in Oriental faiths and practices than it is at present, set many people thinking helpfully by making use of that profoundly true expression.

RELIGION itself may be compared with the single ray of white light, while different systems of religious thought and observance may remind us of the various rainbow hues or prismatic colours which proceed from the perfect ray and make it manifest partially in varying tints. Universal

Religion must be a source or fountain whence sectional religions take their rise ; therefore if we can grasp universality in religion we shall have no difficulty in understanding readily how there may be seven churches but only one Church, to go no further afield than to note the language of the opening chapters of the Apocalypse. There is one Spirit and that single Spirit according to the record speaks to those single-eared disciples who listen undividedly to the messages which are delivered to the seven Angels of the seven churches. The language in accepted English versions is peculiar but singularly thought-provoking and in perfect agreement with other similar language employed in the New Testament, both in gospels and epistles. "Let thine eye be single" agrees perfectly with "he that hath an ear." Two eyes and two ears are decidedly better than only one, provided they work together and the eyes are correctly focussed. We then are surely to understand that what we sometimes call a dual mind is better than a single mind, even though "a double-minded man is unstable in all his ways." Unity, not uniformity, is the goal at which we should aim, therefore we see through our two eyes as though they were but one and we listen through our two ears as though we had but a

single ear. This is the equivalent of *one-pointedness*, and suggests such complete concentration of the higher kind that the doing of but one thing continually does not ever imply a monotonous repetition of identical performances, much less does it signify complete inability to comprehend how we may function on more than one plane of consciousness ; it clearly describes an unfaltering attitude of Thought and Will in which Will and Thought act in perfect consonance, one never conflicting with the other, though each is necessarily fulfilling a specially appointed end of definitely particular service.

One Spirit delivers a message to each of seven churches included in one greater Church ; and these powerful messages all contain admonitions and warnings specifically applicable to the members of the special communities to which they are respectively addressed. Swedenborg, in his massive treatise "The Apocalypse Unveiled" throws much interesting and instructive light upon seven distinct manners of people, all alike called to live holy regenerate lives, but differing in modes of expression of usefulness and sanctity. James Pryce in a very curious work, "The Apocalypse Unsealed," speaks of seven centres of Initiation into the

Mysteries which actually existed in Asia Minor about eighteen centuries ago, and then branches forth upon an esoteric exposition of the whole subject in a manner by no means foreign to the Swedenborgian concept of a "church within man," but dealing out a somewhat different brand of theology. The very beautiful account of John on Patmos beholding a Great White Throne encircled by a Rainbow harmonizes exactly with this record of seven distinct churches in an earlier chapter of the same Apocalypse.

From times immemorial the Number Seven has been accounted, next to the Number One, as the most sacred of all save the Number Ten, which transcends the nine objective numerals and is the Sephirothic Number in kabbalistic treatises.

It is a noteworthy fact that the eminent American scholar and preacher, James Freeman Clarke, for many years one of the most influential liberal ministers of religion in Boston, brought out many years ago a splendid work in two volumes, "Ten Great Religions," the first volume entering into detailed descriptions of ten distinct religious systems, eight older and one (Mohammedanism) younger than Christianity. In the second volume the author undertook to compare and contrast one

system with another and ended with some tentative predictions concerning a coming concept and expression of religion in which the excellencies of all the systems would be included, but from which their defects would be excluded. Since the days when that treatise was produced an immense mass of literature bearing upon the same general theme has flooded the book markets of the world, but despite the high hopes entertained in 1893, when the World's Parliament of Religions was convened in Chicago and remained sitting through seventeen intensely busy and instructive days, in many quarters we find as little disposition toward unification as in days long preceding the awakening of what we term often "the modern spirit," and indeed just because that spirit has announced itself so fearlessly and decidedly, the old conservative spirit, which may also have been partly slumbering, has aroused itself vigorously to attack the newcomer.

The vital point of disagreement between theologians and sacerdotalists who cling to the letter of a single creed and insist vigorously upon the observance of sacramental ordinances, and these men and women of much wider perception and fuller insight who can peer below all surfaces and

behold something of the unity of life working through all agencies, is due to the fact that spiritual communion and fellowship is felt by the latter in a much intenser degree than by the former, though one may be fully as sincere and truly pious as the other.

The publication and wide circulation of the works of Sir Rabindranath Tagore in English dress has done much to accustom English-speaking readers and hearers to the employment of so felicitous a phrase as "Practical Mysticism," a term employed by a reviewer in the Literary Supplement to the "New York Times" dated November 5, 1916, when the famous scholar was expected soon to arrive in that city and deliver his message in person to the throngs who were eager to hear and see a man who preaches unification in so attractive and convincing a manner that the wall of separation does actually get largely broken down between Oriental and Occidental modes of thought and expression.

Readers of the "Occult Review" were treated about the same time to an article by C. Sheridan Jones, entitled "Charles Dickens and the Occult," which contains a most impressive tribute to the doctrine of unity interpreted in diversity.

A singularly vivid psychic experience is related in the words of the eminent novelist who, when enjoying some real spiritual intercourse with an entity removed from physical embodiment, enquired concerning the "best religion."

Mentioning the Roman Catholic Church as possibly the most helpful institution for certain souls seeking light and sense of real communion with the Divine, the spirit says to the one who makes this suggestion, "For you, it is the best." Here the implication is unmistakable that it is by no means the best for everybody but only for those, to quote again from the same fascinating narrative, whom it enables to "think of God oftener and believe in Him more steadily." Here there is no confounding of means with end. The end in view is spiritual constancy or steadfastness, and as avowed Mystics might phrase it, "living the presence of God." If a church helps its members to deeper spirituality it is serving a definite purpose for which a church should exist, if it exist at all, and in the last analysis it cannot greatly matter whether the end is reached by travelling along one external route or another.

An appeal can be made by a religious institution to a community at large, and that most successfully, for sympathy and support, provided, to use a

popular modern expression, the church "makes good" or "delivers the goods." We very much doubt whether the "institutional" church, which lays great stress on amusing the young people and looking after their physical welfare by providing a gymnasium, swimming pool and several other purely external annexes, has any great claim upon our regard, not because these things are not good and useful in themselves, but for the simple reason that they can be very well provided in an avowedly secular manner and a church or temple is not required to supply them.

This remark is by no means intended as an adverse criticism, for there is much to be said in favour of the church, which is largely a high-class social club, on the ground that it can provide sociability and entertainment in a cleanly wholesome manner and thereby counteract many tendencies in a downward direction in the community in which it may do its useful work as a veritable beacon light. There is, however, something to be said in favour of specialism, and while religion ought to enter fully into everyday life and sanctify alike the school, the office, the study and the kitchen, there are special needs of human nature which institutions devoted specifically to

supplying spiritual necessities should be prepared in a special manner intelligently and satisfactorily to meet. Without doubt the church edifice with its group of surrounding buildings, in which all manner of useful things are done and in which really good entertainments are provided, will prove more and more serviceable as years roll on, yet a distinctively spiritual ministry catering to definitely spiritual requirements will of necessity be a "Mary" and not a "Martha" ministry. But Mary and Martha are sisters and can live under the same roof and appreciate each other's industries. The fact of the matter is that true Marys do understand the work of Marthas but Marthas rarely appreciate the work of Marys. All external ecclesiastical activities are readily comprehensible to the average man and woman, but the deeper and higher ministries are unseen and enigmatical, but no more so if carried on in a cloister than in a London drawing-room.

Let us institute a parallel between a truly conscientious cloistered nun steeped in Medievalism and a thoroughly up-to-date practitioner of mental healing. At first sight they are extremely dissimilar, for one immures herself in a convent in the heart of the country, retired from all intercourse

with the outer world, and the other occupies a charming residence in South Kensington. The appearance, dress, manners and phraseology of these two equally good women will be found widely dissimilar. One uses the speech and methods of the Middle Ages while the other employs the latest language and methods of the present century ; but the object of both is to help humanity in a mystical or unseen manner by the employment of subtle agencies which make no appeal whatever to the external senses and which to a grossly materialistic intellect must appear utterly fantastic and really non-existent. One (the cloistered nun) prays for the world outside her retreat while she is immured in a solitary cell ; the other gives "absent treatments" for the benefit of persons physically out of her reach while she is seated in a comfortable boudoir or reclining easily upon a luxurious divan in her private room. These instances are extremes, and there are multitudes of variations between these two extremely opposite situations ; but there is no radical or essential difference in motive or idea in any of the instances. The nun in her convent and the well-to-do modern lady of good social position in her extremely comfortable suite of delightfully appointed rooms replete with every elegance

believe at root exactly alike, though they express their belief in such diametrically opposed forms as luxury and austerity. To call one right and the other wrong is to arrogate to ourselves the right to give judgment in cases where we are utterly incompetent to pronounce a verdict. To admit that differences in temperament and circumstances may call for widely different methods of procedure is to display a reasonable amount of insight into the mystery and meaning of the number Seven. These widely dissimilar women are in the one Church but not in the same one of the Seven Churches. Tennyson's exquisite tribute to prayer can be quoted as appropriate with reference to the ministry of the one as to that of the other, for each prays, but not both in the same tongue or amid the same exterior accompaniments.

The 32nd canto of "In Memoriam" contains a verse which well expresses the truly spiritual life, no matter how, when, or where it may be lived :

" Thrice blest whose lives are faithful prayers,
Whose loves in higher love endure ;
What souls possess themselves so pure,
Or is there blessedness like theirs ? "

Over and over again, as we peruse really fine literature, our attention is called to the decisive

manner in which deeply reflective authors invariably discriminate between the singular and the plural as between the one ray of light and one or other of the prismatic hues which flow forth from it.

In the quatrain just quoted we note the clear distinction between "love" and "loves," just as in all truly mystical or theosophical writings we find the distinction always impressive between the one self and one or other of many "selves." In seeking to find a common denominator, the discovery of which must do a great deal toward establishing the religion of to-morrow on a firm basis, we are compelled to search below all surfaces and ignore all external disagreements. Outward differences are unavoidable, therefore they should be welcomed and frankly acknowledged, as they always were by that eminent psychologist, Professor William James, of Harvard, who had no difficulty in reconciling differences and elucidating the problem of universal *v.* sectional religion.

Arrogance and ignorance conspire together to obscure grand essentials and to magnify external differences. One Holy Catholic Church is a sublimely impressive phrase, but what will it mean for the next generation if universal religion holds the centre of the stage?

Scholastic theologians will be easily able to interpret it to the multitude as they have always translated it academically among themselves in the high places of ecclesiastical erudition. The spirit of the Church includes far more than are contained within its outward body, will undoubtedly be the message impressively delivered. *Ecclesia Docens*, the outward teaching church, which has no special commission to reveal the higher aspects of theology to the masses, has done much to stir up strife and render a dream of Christian unity nothing more than a dream. The coming Age will not be satisfied with merely Christian unity, if by Christianity is meant an external system of faith and worship totally separated from all other cults. Tagore's message can be received in Europe and America, while he hails from India, because it is profound and universal, but by no means every doctrine that comes out of Asia is to be commended to the Western world, any more than every teaching of Western missionaries can be recommended as helpful toward ushering in the new Age of mutual understanding and appreciation between East and West.

The same old story is ever being told afresh ; the same old discrepancies between Letter and Spirit

are ever being made manifest ; it is therefore the work of all seekers after Wisdom to search in every available mine and unhesitatingly discriminate as reason and conscience unitedly advise, between a hampering stultifying devotion to external ceremonial and a life-giving acceptance of vitalizing spiritual verities. Thomas Huxley and Matthew Arnold readily conceived the possibly immense benefit conferable upon a nation by a National Church, but these eminent thinkers went scarcely further than to contend that general moral interests must be richly served by a Church which should be representative of the ideals and aspirations of the Nation. The Church of England has often afforded striking examples of men of light and leading in holy orders grasping great essentials firmly and reassigning non-essentials to the place to which they were assigned in the long ago by Paul the Apostle. But never is a great voice upraised in any church on behalf of universality than cries of heresy are also raised. Edward Carpenter left the ministry of the Church in his early manhood for what he felt was a wider and freer field of useful service to humanity, but Maurice and others of his friends remained within its pale and did a splendid work therein. The enormous influence for good exerted by

Farrar, Stanley and other noble divines at Westminster, could probably never have been accomplished by them had they resigned their ecclesiastical offices and gone forth independently like Carpenter ; but, on the other hand, Carpenter could not conscientiously have remained within the fold, so his place was *extra muros*. Wilberforce, at St. John's, Westminster, for many years did a splendid work within the Established Church of England that he could hardly have accomplished outside, but though he faithfully discharged every ministerial function and regarded the sacraments as means of grace, he was at heart a Mystic as his published sermons clearly prove ; but to his type of mind there is no antagonism between Mysticism and Ritualism. The power of the Spirit to heal was a doctrine not only taught but demonstrated by Wilberforce, and though his particular method of healing appealed strongly to church-people who love devotional forms and receive far more benefit in consecrated edifices and amid hallowed surroundings than they would were they deprived of these accessories and reduced to sole dependence upon interior realizations, the fact that certain temperaments are helped in those ways by no means contradicts the equally well-proven asser-

tion that other temperaments cannot grasp the value of these "means of grace," which to them appear only as superfluities and often as encumbering and beclouding superstitions. The real point at issue must always be the question of absolute sincerity on the part of the officiating minister.

Compromises and concessions always ultimately prove futile. There are clearly two equally honourable standpoints, viz.: (1) The view-point of the religious minister who devoutly believes in an interior significance in the words and ceremonies he employs and who, therefore, can be guilty of no juggling with conviction when he utters certain formulas or celebrates prescribed rites. (2) The view-point of the seceder who leaves an organization because he personally cannot endorse the letter of its creed and ceremonial and fails to perceive a hidden meaning in words and ceremonies which, to him, must either be taken at their face value literally or else discarded altogether if one is to be truly conscientious.

The true religion of to-morrow may well be represented by both Mystics and Radicals, and best of all by those who can so unite Mysticism and Radicalism as to see clearly how extremely helpful ceremonial may be to some persons while actually

proving a hindrance to others. We cannot foresee any uniformity in method in days to come, but we can foresee an intelligent, mutually appreciative application of the magnificent apostolic counsel, "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind." Surely no one can admire a truckling policy; no attitude can be more harmful and despicable than one of insincerity. Hypocrisy is the superlative vice condemned by the Master according to the evangelists. Salvation, if the word means anything worth holding on to, cannot be promoted or secured by any compromise with conviction, by any pretence of believing what one does not believe or of not believing what one does believe.

The two great Creeds of Christendom called *Apostles* and *Nicene* are wholly unobjectionable in form because each one begins with a purely personal statement, "I believe." The great objection to the form of the Athanasian Creed is that it commences with a totally different declaration, "Whosoever will be saved." A vast number of orthodox Christian theologians who had had no fault whatever to find with the doctrine set forth in that elaborate chicanery of phrases undertaking to define Deity, have seriously objected to what they have not hesitated to call its "damnable clauses." Yet

Charles Kingsley, one of the most liberal and spiritually-minded men, who took part in a controversy raging around that Creed, pronounced it "beautiful poetry," and it is now often designated "a hymn of the Catholic faith."

The poet's temperament differs radically from that of the practical man of affairs, therefore words do not really convey the same meaning to both. To the literalist, practical and hard-headed as we often call him, there are no inner meanings anywhere ; he can therefore accept in a severe external manner a Confession of Faith or with equal rigidity denounce it. All our Sacred Literature is largely allegorical, we can therefore well understand how difficult it has been for non-poetic, non-imaginative natures to steer clear of the extremes of hard acceptance and equally hard rejection. The poet is the reconciler, for he possesses insight into what Wordsworth called "the soul of things." More and more are we coming to realize that only poets can be adequate philosophers, for they alone can penetrate veils and see through obscure disguises. Orientals always speak in metaphor and the world over children enjoy parables and fables. The folklore of every people is a monument to its feelings, ideals and aspirations, not merely a garbled history

of literal events wrapped up in almost unintelligible symbolism.

To many minds it comes as a rude shock to be told that the same great truths have been given to the world in many ages through the lips of inspired seers, because it deals a death-blow to their beloved exclusiveness ; but shocks of that sort are necessary if we are ever to arrive at mutual understanding and exhibit genuine human sympathy. The disagreeable and indeed offensive word "toleration" is extolled in many places, as though to "tolerate" one's neighbours were a mark of true spirituality. But who, let us ask, must be the tolerators and who the tolerated ? Universal toleration is no panacea for human discords ; it is only a miserable make-shift for unity, as "armed neutrality" can never be the equivalent of genuine peace between nations. The assumption that some people have a better right on earth than others, and that certain systems of religion are divinely inspired while others are systems of error, is a monumental tribute to unrighteous self-righteousness and actually intolerable self-conceit. We ought not to tolerate the thought of either tolerating others or of being tolerated ourselves. We must discover a *modus vivendi* whereby we can learn to so live side by side

that we honourably esteem each other and at the same time avail ourselves freely and fully of the right of self-expression. The popular saying, "What is one's meat is another's poison," may be an exaggeration of facts which actual experience can never bear out fully; but there is a large grain of truth in the old adage, and there is truth also in the saying that what is good food for us at one time is almost poisonous for us at some other time on account of our changing conditions. The food of which we partake, whether mentally or physically, if it is to benefit us, must be appropriate to supply our immediate needs and these needs often quickly change and greatly vary. In the practice of Colour-Therapy and in the field of Musical Therapeutics this is clearly demonstrated, for the exciting influence of red light and martial music, while extremely beneficial whenever we need arousing, is pernicious in its effects when we need tranquillizing.

Some persons are constitutionally drowsy and nearly always require stimulating; others again are almost always keyed up to concert pitch or beyond and need rest-inducing influences; the intelligent practitioner therefore instead of foolishly glorifying one colour or one style of music and berating others, provides himself with a diversified equipment

enabling him to supply on demand what is then and there specifically needed.

On the basis of this sane and sober doctrine many fallacies have been upraised which need to be quickly demolished ; the chief of which is that we are justified in playing unduly upon the fears of certain types of people and telling them tales of hell and damnation which we do not really believe for the sake of helping them along the road to salvation. It is difficult to conceive how any truly conscientious person can justify employing what he believes to be false doctrine as a missionary agent, though it is thoroughly rational to make deliberate choice of different aspects of what we feel to be truth to meet varying requirements. American Universalists have contrived an extremely useful phrase for employment in cases where warnings require to be given in "The certainty of retribution for sin," but this clause in the Universalist Confession of Faith is immediately followed by the glorious affirmation, "The final harmony of all souls with God."

Retribution, penalty, chastisement and many kindred words in a severe category are full of helpful meaning, like the phrase in the Apocalypse "Whom I love I rebuke and chasten," for though

chastisement is a painful process and rebukes are often very hard to bear, the end in view is enlightenment and purification. It is well worth while enduring sorrow if sorrow is to be ultimately transformed into joy, for the plain inference in that connection is that it took the sorrow, as an ingredient in the alchemical crucible, to produce the joy which resulted from its transmutation. "These are they who have come out of great tribulation" is a most consoling passage for those who are now in the throes of tribulation, for it amounts to a testimony to the effect that present sufferings are stepping-stones to coming bliss. It is absurd to attempt to substitute merely vapid sentimentalism for the old asperity now happily dying out, for we need a religion with a strong intellectual and moral backbone, not an invertebrate toy which is beautiful to contemplate in times of ease and plenty but useless immediately a tempest shall arise.

Kabbalistic teachings concerning equilibrium are intensely bracing. In a divinely designed temple, we are told in the Zohar or Book of Light, there are five Arches and ten Columns, the columns appearing from below as though they were entirely separated pillars. The extreme illustration of the balance of contraries is where we are told that Mildness and

Severity stand opposite each other ; they are indeed polar opposites contrasting vividly ; but these are not two isolated pillars but the two columns of a single lofty arch.

The religion of days to come must practically interpret this kabbalistic teaching by proving how we can be as severe as need be to rebuke iniquity, and reform offenders who require immediate chastisement, and at the same instant as mild as possible consistently with the discharge of our duty to the refractory individual as a person and to society at large, the interest of which must ever be our large concern.

Religion properly must be a binding together in the sense of a harmonizing and uniting force. Cruelty, vindictiveness, spite, can never be justifiable, but there is righteous anger and holy indignation. To "vent spleen" is always ignoble and never corrective in its influence upon any upon whom it has been vented. To find the true balance between foolish leniency and harsh condemnation is indeed to hit upon that happy Middle Way which has always been upheld as the ideal path but very seldom discovered, because some barrier of unreasonable predilection in one direction or another bars the road. The religion of the

immediate future must be essentially a religion of unification adapted to a period of exceptionally wide reconstructive activities. We can never go back to what we have lost ; abandoned ground can never be reoccupied in precisely the same manner as formerly ; for whenever wasted places are rebuilt and trampled fields recultivated there must be an element of newness added to all retentions of excellencies known and prized of old.

The difficulty experienced by many readers of really great literature—containing some of the utterances of Masters or World Teachers, interspersed with a great deal of very inferior matter—is due to the fact that the grandest expressions of all are the most complex and at the same time the most exquisitely simple. An all-containing precept from the Great White Lodge contains seven distinct messages in one, and each particular church must find and appropriate its own message without in the slightest degree antagonizing any one of the other churches. There may be people who seriously quibble over the word "new" whenever they encounter it, because they fail to understand that "new" means fresh, perpetually flowing, in its most rudimentary sense, and in a still broader implication it must refer to an ever-increasing

development of what was at first apprehended only in germ. As an example we may well consider the often quoted words "A new commandment give I unto you, that ye love one another." There the quotation frequently ends, leaving room for the caviller's trite contention that such a commandment could not have been new on the lips of Jesus because it is found in the Mosaic Law. But let the text be finished with the additional words which clearly explain its import and there can be no difficulty in beholding the element of newness, "as I have loved you." Here we have a glorious illustration of a Master fulfilling the Law and the Prophets. To love one another in some minor degree is good, but to love one another to the extreme limit is a counsel of perfection transcending an ordinary commandment. The command to love one's neighbour as oneself is often very narrowly interpreted in these days as it was in days of old, for "neighbour" has a very limited meaning for some persons and a positively universal suggestion to make to others. The religion of to-morrow will not destroy anything worth preserving, but will go a long way toward fulfilling much that still remains unfulfilled. One of the very brightest and most encouraging signs of the prevailing tendency to

attack religious institutions and ministers of religion in general, is that the persons making the attacks are not intentionally speaking or writing against self-sacrifice and philanthropy, but against harsh literalism, hard dogmatism, and most of all smug self-righteousness which bears no fruit in beneficent activities.

The seven churches of Asia were and are rebuked for their shortcomings and told in unmistakably plain terms that unless they amend their ways they will be removed out of their places; and suppose they are removed, what then will occur? May we not call to mind Emerson's splendidly optimistic utterance

"When angels go out it is that archangels may come in"?

If we are tenderly attached to any special institution and feel convinced that it can still exert a power for good, if kept alive and nourished, then it is for us to exert our best energies to revive and purify the organization we hold so dear. But should every existing system pass away with the dawning of a new and brighter era, then we should only have fresh opportunity to sing again with Tennyson:

"Our little systems have their day,
They have their day and cease to be;
They are but broken lights from Thee,
For Thou, O Lord, art more than they.'

CHAPTER VIII

THE IDEA OF SPIRIT-COMMUNION IN THE RELIGION OF TO-MORROW

It would be absurd to attempt any forecast of the dawning faith without taking into large account the rapidly growing interest in proofs of the continuity of individual selfhood beyond physical dissolution.

Though the word Spiritualism has not been favourably regarded in certain influential quarters, the term PSYCHICAL RESEARCH has been treated as not only respectable but even as scientific from the start. It is often only the case of the proverbial "rose" by some other name, for the very same conclusions are frequently arrived at by dignified, painstaking members of learned Psychical Research Societies as by far less prominent personages who have investigated in humbler ways but none the less sincerely. From the standpoint of old theology there is a formidable concept of Satan still employed

as a scarecrow to warn investigators off the field of investigation, and while that scarecrow never scares the eager earnest scientist, it very often so far alarms the timid layman that he refuses to investigate the psychic problem, fearing lest he should imperil his spiritual interests by so doing. The old saying that there is never smoke without fire is as true in this connection as in any other, but very often a small volume of smoke suggests to timid beholders a far fiercer fire than is actually blazing, and frequently those who cry "fire" loudest know not where to correctly locate it and least of all how to extinguish it.

Spirit-communion has always been a human experience. Spontaneous manifestations of spiritual presences have occurred in all climes and ages according to world-wide and age-long testimony, therefore it does not rest with us to choose whether we will or will not hold intercourse with beings usually unseen and frequently unknown, but it is happily largely within our own ability to exercise intelligent discretion in the regulation of this inevitable intercourse. The Law of Attraction must always be reckoned with. There can be no close psychical associations where there is no mutual affinity. We grant that this attraction or affinity

may be unknown to at least one of the parties actively concerned, but no effect can spring from other than an adequate or efficient cause. The Sacred Literature of all peoples literally teems with records of apparitions, visions, and still more directly substantial communings between men, women and children embodied in flesh and unseen entities who exerted a very real and often powerful influence upon their lives.

To endeavour to so rationalize every such narrative as to reduce it to the level of a mere commonplace, everyday occurrence has been often tried and found utterly wanting, for in the very midst of the intensely sceptical and negatory atmosphere which prevailed toward the close of the nineteenth century arose scientific rehabilitations of the "ghost."

That a vast amount of distorted imagination, mal-observation and trickery have been intermingled with genuine spiritual intercourse in all countries and in all epochs, seems incontrovertibly demonstrable, and at the present moment we are not entirely free from foundationless assumptions on the one hand and by-products of hysteria on the other. But though "all that glitters is not gold," gold does glitter, and though some intercourse with

unseen spheres, even when genuine, may be highly undesirable, we are in consequence thereof no more justified in condemning or discarding the whole subject than we are, if we take a similarly sweeping attitude in connection with any other branch of study, for truth and error, like precious metal and alloy, are found on earth together. Once let it be admitted, even tacitly, that there is a spiritual world and we may profitably consider how William Stead reminded his readers in a widely circulated pamphlet bearing the decisive title "*How I Know the Dead Return*" that the tide flowing out from physical existence, carrying with it thousands of souls every day, may be a very different sort of tide from the one which renders it possible for those who have passed away to return to their former moorings.

If there be reason in this analogy, he contends that we may thereby account for the fact that only comparatively seldom have we striking evidence of direct individual communion with one who has departed. This tide may now be undergoing some change from its accustomed action, and indeed it may be that there is calculable periodicity in the flowing and ebbing of this mysterious tide, so that at the close of every great epoch or era in this

planet's history a change of action does take place, rendering true the widely extended testimony to the fact that when ages or dispensations begin and close,—and one must always commence when another terminates,—there is so startling a demonstration of the nearness of the seen to the unseen that "miracles" occur and multiply, but these so-called miracles are as fully due to the action of immutable order as are the most familiar happenings with which we are all perpetually familiar. The blooming of a century plant is in itself no greater wonder than the blossoming of a rose-bush, but it excites immeasurably more interest because of its extreme rarity. A total eclipse of the sun or the appearance of a comet is fully as natural a phenomenon as our familiar sunrise and sunset scenes, at which few but artists and poets really gaze and wonder.

Only a few centuries ago all over Europe a solar eclipse or the appearance of a comet was regarded as a directly supernatural occurrence threatening humanity with dire distress from heaven. Now no sensible or sane person can possibly say that modern knowledge has convinced us that no such phenomena occurred as these which struck such unreasonable terror into the breasts of our predecessors ; it is

frankly admitted that they saw what they say they saw, or at least a large percentage of it, but they did not attribute it to the rightful cause. Science never denies phenomena but endeavours to interpret all phenomena in a reasonable, orderly manner. If we take a truly scientific attitude toward an immense number of ghost stories and accounts of magical performances we shall find that they are for the most part explicable without reference to any of those blood-curdling, diabolical interpretations which are still offered by intentionally truthful expositors who are steeped in Medievalism and for whom the exceptionally weird and uncanny possesses an amazing fascination.

The Devil and vast hordes of inferior evil spirits are easy to imagine if one's mind dwells on horrors and one has become morbidly prone to centre attention upon the most terrifying and disagreeable experiences one may encounter along the road of life. Evil spirits may be as closely associated with filthy disorders as ever any superstitious monk or cultured Swedenborgian has imagined them to be ; but if there be an influx from the "hells" in these painful cases of horrible disorder, we must consider the good motto "Cleanliness is next to Godliness" and find that the cleaner we keep our cities, our

residences and our persons, the fewer evidences we obtain of proximity to infernal regions.

Now it is perfectly reasonable and intensely ethical to maintain that outward filthiness is favourable to disease and outward cleanliness conducive to its extirpation ; so on the inner planes of life there is abundant room for teaching that unclean desires and meditations may be the means of inducing infernal influx, while pure desires and noble meditations are the effective antidote to all undesirable incursions. Communion with unseen spheres can be studied scientifically and at the same time religiously, and in the religion of the days to come we feel convinced that much helpful knowledge on this enormous subject of universal interest will be widespread, though now it is confined apparently to a comparatively few specially enlightened students of psychology.

The Spirit-World is not a place separated from Earth as though it were another planet, and in reality no two planets are remote from each other, and none are remote from the Sun, it being only our very imperfect response to interplanetary vibrations which makes us suppose and harp upon remoteness. Every modern invention does away in each succeeding instance with something more of the old

belief in impermeability and incommunicability. We are learning, and very rapidly, that our old ideas of solidity and remoteness are utterly foreign to what we are coming to know about the constitution of our Universe. It is therefore entirely natural that a period which has given us wireless telegraphy, and many other formerly unconceived of wonders, should present us simultaneously with proof of the real communion of human entities each with the other through other channels than simply the five universally acknowledged avenues of sense. There is nothing actually more *divine* or *diabolical* in the fact of spirit-communion than in any other facts of mutual intercourse. The moral excellence or depravity of any phase of intercommunication cannot possibly be determined by questions mechanical or geographical. It cannot be morally right to send a letter through the post office and immoral to convey the same tidings from ship to ship at sea or from station to station on land by the use of means known only to wireless operators. The fact is so self-evident that the nature of the communication, together with the object or intention prompting it, must regulate its ethical or non-ethical character that no student of moral philosophy could be induced to waste energy in enquiring how you

sent a message or with whom you communicated, his enquiry would relate solely to what motives prompted the transmission and what was the import of the information given and received. Applying this simple and entirely reasonable test to all that passes for spiritual communication, we may safely allege that a great deal is trivial, a little is vile, and a fairly large percentage is useful and edifying. Professor James Hyslop, of New York, long ago threshed out the question of the seeming triviality of the great bulk of alleged spirit messages by calling the attention of his scientific and literary colleagues, and then the reading public at large, to the similar nature of their own friendly correspondence and employment of the telephone.

If the religion now rising in human consciousness,—a reasonable and humane religion,—goes on developing, as it surely must, it will certainly eradicate the foolish, foundationless belief that because someone has parted with his robe of flesh he has instantly become a totally different variety of individual. It may be very true that in many instances masks will be removed and we shall no longer be hiding behind any sort of disguise ; but we shall appear as we *are*, and we are radically what our affections constitute us and incidentally what

our opinions make us. To consider ourselves as continually dwelling within a limitless spiritual Universe, of which any definable section may be only the merest fraction, yet every particle of which may be of the same consistency as the whole, is to take a more rational view of our larger life than that of the outer senses, and this view moreover agrees entirely with every inference and deduction logically derivable from what we are constantly learning through scientific avenues concerning the homogeneity of substance. The whereabouts of the Spirit-World need not concern us in the least or cause us any sort of anxiety, for we all know that there can well be an unseen universe of life permeating or pervading the outer crust of matter, which we often term "gross matter" for convenience' sake to differentiate it from finer grades of matter, which properly speaking is only an inclusive term for mother substance. It is never *where* we live but *how* we live that determines our happiness or misery, therefore the religious aspect of the question of heavens and hells can be in no way affected by any theories or discoveries concerning localized or non-localized spheres, like the seven spheres alluded to with great frequency in much Spiritualistic literature which began to appear

shortly after 1848. From the religious standpoint it can make no difference whatever whether one is living on this planet or on any other orb, or in some middle region called inter-planetary, for joy and sorrow, satisfaction and discontent are results of interior conditions only, despite the fact that it often appears that outward circumstances are causes of happiness or misery. The famous Mystic, Mme. Guyon, expressed the truth on this mighty subject so extremely well in the following verses that we can do no better than commend a profound study of their import to all who are perplexing themselves over the moot question of where we go to when we drop our mortal frames :

"While place we seek or place we shun
The soul finds happiness in none ;
But with my God to guide my way
'Tis equal joy to go or stay."

Even the commonest experiences of the average individual in time of bereavement proves the truth of this asseveration, which needs no profound philosophy to explain. The error into which Environmentalists, who are at the opposite pole from Mystics, are ever prone to fall is that of confusing effect with cause, and by reason of observing obvious phenomena only reaching an un-

warranted though a seemingly justified conclusion.

The real question at issue is not What have we ? or Where are we ? or With whom are we associating ? but What is our inner relation toward these places, objects and persons ? Though from the standpoint of the student of Art there are certain laws or rules of symmetry and beauty which can be explained theoretically with much accuracy, no one can guarantee that because music is technically good or a picture in harmony with correct rules of perspective and colouring that a particular individual will enjoy listening to the music or gazing upon the picture. From the experience standpoint of the individual the saying is ever justified, "Beauty is in the eye of the beholder." The old idea of going to a beautiful musical heaven and being transported with delight at its scenery and ravished with ecstasy at sound of its melodies, always presupposes inward agreement with exterior environment. If you love Jesus you will be happy in a realm of which he is the centre, is the statement of the logical Christian theologian ; in like manner if you love him not you could experience no joy in his society. After all the tortuous windings of casuistry the theologian comes back eventually to the starting-point of all true

philosophy, "Love is the fulfilling of the Law." Swedenborg did no more essentially in many of his dissertations than recall the Protestant Christian world in the eighteenth century to something of its earlier faith, and though he animadverted against the Church of Rome in no measured accents in many of his voluminous descriptions of things heard and seen in the realms beyond ordinary physical observation, at many points his doctrine concerning love or the will came very near the essence of accepted Catholic theology. All the nefarious traffic in indulgences which disgraced the Church in Europe just before the Protestant Reformation, and many kindred ecclesiastical abuses, led the foremost among the reformers to denounce the doctrine of Purgatory while they retained Hell. This simply gives evidence that in the heat of controversy, as invariably occurs, they were so blinded with contemplation of accreted errors that they failed to see the solid foundation on which the superstructure rested which they felt it their solemn duty to overturn. Just because there is a fundamental truth in the idea of purgatory it is untrue that anyone can pay another's penalty or deliver another from the inevitable consequences of his own thoughts, words and deeds. At present the whole

trend of thought in Christendom is toward explaining purgatory and proving the folly and heartlessness of a doctrine of endless misery.

Adelaide Procter in "The Story of a Faithful Soul" disposed effectively of the time equation in the idea of purgatorial cleansing, for she related a touching anecdote in thrilling verse intending to show how what we imagined might require one thousand years to accomplish was completed in a single moment of the intensest anguish possible for us at present to conceive. We always need to keep close company in our reasoning with Swedenborg's immortal trinity composed of Love, Wisdom and Use so as not to go astray in our surmises when we lack positive demonstration of any doctrine we are promulgating so far as its minute particulars are concerned.

Our conscience, reason and affection, the three elements within us which make it possible for us to gain any real knowledge of the Universe, demand inclusively that all souls shall be dealt with wisely, lovingly and usefully, otherwise the Universe is unmoral or immoral, moral it cannot be. But we possess within us an insatiable craving for strict morality, i.e. impartial equity, and we, the possessors of this craving, are included in the

Universe; it is therefore perfectly rational to insist that the Universe contains in far greater fulness than we can realize what we find within ourselves in limited degree, and what we demand shall be shown forth eventually to the satisfaction of every intelligent entity capable of making the demand which can only thus be satisfied.

It is only because we are so extremely hasty in our conclusions that we ever grumble or ever incline towards Pessimism. The outbreak of the Great War in 1914 caused Professor Ernst Haeckel, of Germany, to pour forth a torrent of most depressing comment upon his own inability to have any confidence in the real goodness of the Universe, and he fell into the fatal error, common to all who accustom themselves to regard external facts too seriously, because almost if not quite exclusively, that his feelings must be shared by all of his contemporaries, while at the same instant in the same University of Jena there were other professors whose views of life were by no means gloomy, yet they were equally in the war zone and equally capable of all natural human emotions.

Elsa Barker in giving to the world "Letters from a Living Dead Man" rendered an extremely useful and kindly service to many anguished hearts and

bewildered minds exactly at a time when such teachings as she declares she receives from her friend in spirit, Judge Hatch, are immensely helpful in directing attention to a possible other side of calamity. Looked at from the earthly side alone, no one with a mind to think and a heart to feel can escape the conclusion that if there is nothing beyond conflict such as humanity indulges in on battlefields, there may be a Power at the centre of the Universe but it cannot be a benevolent Energy ; but directly the veil is lifted, even if but a very little way, and we can take a peep at such beauteous scenes as Judge Hatch describes on the other side of things, the situation is so greatly relieved that we begin at least to hope again with our inspiring poet Tennyson that " somehow good will be the final goal of ill."

All spirit-communications cannot evince equal insight or prove of equal value intrinsically if they are exactly what they claim to be ; but every alleged message from the unseen deserves some consideration at the hands of impartial students, whose only object must be to ascertain as many facts as possible and subsequently draw such conclusions as, according to their best judgment, the accumulated facts necessitate. The enthusiastic Spiritualist who, in the first flush of zeal

untempered with discretion, is disposed to accept whatever comes out of the unseen as a genuinely infallible revelation will soon experience a rude awakening, for he will discover that he is dealing with communicators very much like the people he encounters daily in his social life and at business. But why should one expect otherwise unless some especial preparation has been made for intercourse of an especially exalted character? and few indeed are the private individuals or groups of investigators who have so far studied the necessary conditions for particularly elevated, and therefore exceptionally elevating spiritual intercourse.

The temples of ancient Greece, like those of earlier Egypt, when those mighty lands of history were basking in the sunlight of their highest spiritual attainments, did undoubtedly supply conditions for some oracular communion with higher realms which far transcended all ordinary spiritual communion.

During the first Christian century it seems certain that there were companies of seekers after righteousness who banded themselves together in holy confraternities and succeeded in gaining insight into spiritual realities altogether beyond the commonplace. But the cause of these special enlightenments

can never be found by investigating temple architecture and ritual alone, for though it cannot be denied that certain well-prepared and hallowed places, kept sacred from all unworthy intrusions, are favourable for such high spiritual communion, and the beautiful and impressive ceremonial employed in the celebration of the Mysteries may indeed be a means of grace, we are perpetually confronted with a much deeper problem than that of temples and ceremonials, viz. the interior dispositions of those who frequent the temples and participate in the appointed ceremonial. If sufficient material wealth is at our command we can at any time and anywhere erect a material sanctuary in full conformity with the most beautiful designs revealed from the heavens, and to conduct an impressive ritual needs only a little ceremonial experience which does not differ widely from qualification for effective acting. But supposing we have all this form of godliness and yet no interior power, of how much use will our sanctuaries and rites be to us? Here we confront the ever-present problem of necessary interior conditions for securing the best results through mediumship in Spiritualistic circles, and through conscious individual illumination when we enter a group of Mystics who

are ever seeking to realize the Highest through awakenment of their inmost selves. "God looketh at the heart" is a text always appropriately quoted on such occasions, and we know that in one of the books of Samuel, where it is to be found, it follows immediately upon "man looketh upon the outward appearance." These two impressively contrasted sayings are connected by the explanatory conjunction "but." External conditions are never essential, for they are not always obtainable, and nothing is ever fundamental which is not universally accessible.

From the view-point of dwellers in the Spirit-World it is not what we say and do and wear that counts, but what we think and feel and aspire after; therefore no outward observances are of any real benefit or detriment except to the extent that they aid or hinder our interior harmonization with the Order of the Universe.

It is inconceivable that a "free spirit," to employ a term in frequent use, should be attracted or repelled by anything that exists only on a plane of existence on which that entity is not now living. We all know something of what it is to feel attracted and to feel repelled without any outward reason being assignable for the one sensation or the other.

As we grow more familiar with the operation of law on the inner planes of existence we shall see clearly the why and wherefore of these hitherto mysterious experiences, all of which are definitely attributable to the presence or absence of certain unseen causes and influences belonging to the spiritual universe.

that of natural human discovery. Now at first sight it would seem that these theories are so diametrically opposed that they are irreconcilable, but this is far from being actually the case. The first mentioned theory postulates or presupposes some Divine Being, or at least some spiritual entities higher than ourselves in power and knowledge, who vouchsafe to reveal to us what we could never discover by our own unaided efforts ; they come down measurably to our level and show themselves to us in some garb in which we can appreciate their presence and thereby render it possible for us to learn something from these celestial teachers which we could not find out otherwise. This concept lies at the root of all phases and aspects of the world-wide doctrine of Divine Incarnation, a teaching which we find scattered through all the Bibles of humanity and exerting its influence in every land beneath the heavens.

The second mentioned theory discards the idea of any such celestial manifestation and assumes that we ourselves are capable of discovering without especial guidance from on high all we need to know concerning the universe which contains us. There are so many variations in both these schools of thought, that, though they often drift apart very

widely, there are many occasions when they draw very near together, so much so, that we should find ourselves involved in a hopeless labyrinth of confusing speculation did we endeavour to commit ourselves unreservedly to one or the other of these great doctrines exclusively.

There is certainly a point of juncture not difficult to discover, and that is the self-evident fact that there can be no revelation, so far as we are concerned, without an ability within us to comprehend the revelation, therefore we do in a very true sense actually discover that which is revealed to us and at the same instant it may be completely true that there is a revelator seeking to impress our consciousness with great ideas that otherwise we should not have apprehended.

Granting that there are various grades of intelligent entities living all about us, and that our general ignorance of this tremendous fact may be due solely to lack of adequate development within ourselves, the whole question becomes at once illuminated and we are no longer confronted with overwhelming mystery. The simplest idea of revelation always takes it for granted that Divine dealings are with an infant race, therefore the mode of revelation is accommodated to the requirements

of intellectual immaturity. Dogma everywhere precedes axiom ; propositions we now regard as axiomatic we formerly accepted on the *ipse dixit* of our parents or teachers ; only very gradually do we, as peoples, throw off a sense of utter dependence upon mental and spiritual leaders and strike out for ourselves upon the independent pathway of original investigation.

It is just here that so-called infidelity asserts itself, a so-called infidelity which is often a dawning faith founded on experience which is ultimately to supplant completely the old credulity which took everything for granted. What theologians call "simple faith," which they often highly extol, makes everything easy for priests and all others in authority, but it is evidently not conducive to the development of any high measure of intellectual development to accept even unalloyed truth at the hands of authoritative teachers without so far employing our own reason as to make it possible for us to weigh the evidence presented in favour of the dogmas we are expected to receive.

It may be fearlessly affirmed that no one ever does in any really intelligent sense accept anything that he fails altogether to understand, for the simple reason that a verbal profession of faith does not

necessarily carry with it anything higher or more important than a mechanical pronunciation of remembered words. Ask the average reciter of creeds what he really understands by the phrases he repeats, and he will probably reply that there are deep mysteries in religion and that the Church has expressed her knowledge of those mysteries in sound forms of speech which her children pronounce obediently at her dictation. It is extremely easy for the non-critical mind to assume this attitude and to keep it up indefinitely, and the question now arises, is it possible, and even probable, that the same easy-going acceptance of formulated doctrines continues indefinitely in the post-mortem state?

Judging from the great bulk of communications purporting to come from the spirit-world, we find that a very large percentage are commonplace utterances evidencing no radical change of mental attitude as a result of crossing the mysterious border. True it is that we do receive highly intelligent messages from time to time, and sometimes even communications of a startling character so far as the teaching they convey is concerned; but when such is the case we usually can discover that the communicating intelligence is of an order

very far above the average intellectual level and that the channel through which the information was received was a man, woman or child of rather exceptionally keen intellectual perspicuity. The problem of "mediumship" is one by no means completely solved, and the very word still excites suspicion and antagonism in many quarters, yet it is a perfectly legitimate word and one that properly conveys no uncanny connotation.

That persons are often "under control" in the full meaning of the term we admit, and we are not disposed to say that all controlling influences are of a dark order; but if we would make any real progress in spiritual development we must set to work to awaken within ourselves abilities to enter into a realizing consciousness of spiritual realities which cannot be reached by merely submitting to extraneous influences and allowing our organisms to be employed for the conveyance of intelligence from higher worlds through our passivity.

Without in the least disputing the genuineness and good faith of a multitude of sincere persons who cling to the idea that "control" is necessary as a means for obtaining direct and reliable information from unseen realms, we positively affirm that

there are higher and safer ways of obtaining knowledge, but these ways are not generally so easily opened, for it requires effort on our own part to open them, whereas ordinary phases of mediumship are natural and spontaneous, making themselves manifest frequently in early childhood and simply betraying the fact that the medium is an unusually sensitive human being.

The trained occultist is one who handles himself rather than allows himself to be handled psychically by others. It is just as possible to choose one's company on the psychic plane as on the physical, and it is indeed impossible to do this to any large extent on the one planewithout doing it, even though it be to us unconsciously, on the other also. It is universally admitted that an easily led condition of mind has decided dangers, therefore all works dealing with initiation into the Mysteries treat largely of the sublime conquests which have to be achieved over the temptations to yield blindly to any influence no matter how harmless such yielding may appear.

It is the habit of yielding which is dangerous, while the habit of questioning everything braces the mental faculties and provides one with an armour of defence should influences of a deceitful

character at any time approach. The right kind of questioning attitude, a truly philosophic scepticism, bears not the slightest resemblance to cynicism, suspiciousness or mean distrust of a neighbour's word.

Alert mental faculties are never suspicious, but they are investigative ; the scientific method, pure and simple, can be carried into the field of spiritual research, and far from this mental tone being irreligious, it is devout and reverent in the highest degree and fully compatible with the loftiest conceivable views entertainable of our relations even with Deity.

The rational religionist who has sublime confidence in human faculties as divinely derived has no hesitancy whatsoever in setting to work to employ to the uttermost a power of discernment which he feels is his to use, a talent not to be ignored or buried but put out to interest and increased by exercise. The rational religionist, therefore, even should he go so far as totally to repudiate all priestly intermediation, would not pronounce judgment against an alleged revelation which did not appear to him as true, he simply would pass it by as something which he might properly remain unconcerned about. Here we have struck the sharp dividing line

between two diametrically opposed views of spiritual revelation, and though we found them readily enough in sacerdotal circles and in the vigorous protests against sacerdotalism which are being made continually, we find them no less prominently to the front in modern cults among persons who have shaken off all former ecclesiastical allegiances, and betaken themselves to some new pasture ground where they are at present grazing upon some variety of mental herbage which from the definitely ecclesiastical standpoint must be pronounced heretical.

Here we touch a vital problem in psychology ; we are dealing not with particular creeds and institutions, but with human conditions and temperaments, which are not changed by going over from one institution to another, as though a Christian became a Buddhist for example, or an avowed Materialist became an enthusiastic Spiritualist.

Some years ago the term Freethought was a very popular one employed to designate emancipation from all reliance upon Church and Holy Scripture. Freethinkers boasted loudly of their complete freedom to think as they pleased, and they verbally defied all who would attempt to place fetters upon their mental processes. In the days of Charles Bradlaugh and his associates, " Halls of Science "

were numerous and popular, and thither flocked the self-styled "emancipated." Doubtless there were men and women among them who were freethinkers in the true meaning of the term, but to listen thoughtfully to the utterances of the rank and file of these honest but mistaken persons was soon to discover that they were chained hand and foot by authority. Original ideas were rarely expressed and the writings and sayings of men and women whom these reputed freethinkers regarded as authoritative were quoted quite as dogmatically as were any portion of the Patristic Writings by ecclesiastical dogmatists who followed precisely the same method, the only difference being that they referred to another class of authors and speakers as authorities. This phase has largely passed, and is rapidly giving place to a far more sane and sober attitude, but in the heyday of its eminence it served to show that we have another factor than "priestcraft" to consider when we are questioning the unseen sources whence proceed the extreme opposites of mental liberty and bondage. The history of such definitely modern movements as Spiritualism, Theosophy and Christian Science is constantly bearing witness to the strife that is still waging between submission

to authority and affirmation of individual liberty. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty," is a text that has never been accepted in any large measure at anything like its full value. If we carry with us into unseen spheres, as we undoubtedly do, our leading characteristics, we need not be surprised to be told that every institution on earth that succeeds in holding sway over the minds and consciences of its adherents, has a very much larger constituency on the other side of the mystic border than it has on earth.

The desire to lean and to be led is an almost universal instinct, and up to a rather highly advanced stage of human intellectual development there is no escape from following this instinct, therefore it comes to pass inevitably that there are noble conscientious dictators in the world to-day as there ever have been, just as there are rigid but kindly parents who exact submission to their authority from their children and will brook no parleying after their orders have been given forth.

The new Age upon which we are entering will, without doubt, differ very widely from the period now tragically closing in this one respect more than in all beside, the weakening of extraneous authority and the consequent flowering out of individual

self-reliance to an extent hitherto unknown. Thrones totter and fall ; great personages are snuffed out, and those who blindly followed them are for the moment like sheep deprived of a shepherd. Everywhere the old order is passing into the new and radical changes now taking place, according to numerous testimonies, in the world unseen by mortal eyes are making themselves intensely felt on earth.

The testimony of seership is largely to the effect that many institutions which were long and vigorously sustained by unseen backing are losing their support owing to the mighty changes taking place in the spiritual planet of which the outer earth is but the merest exterior shell. When once the spiritual influx which sustained a movement or kept alive an institution begins to wane, its outward form must either wither or crumble, or a work of reconstruction must commence adapting the organization to meet new conditions and to accomplish another end of service from that which it formerly rendered.

The words attributed to John the Baptist are intensely expressive and impressive : "I must decrease but he must increase," it is the mightier one who is to increase. The lesser light like that

of the moon must give place to the fuller light like that of the sun when night is over and new day breaks over the earth. In noting the disruptive influences at work in any definitely transitional period, we must be careful not to overlook the activity of the reconstructive forces which are surely building the new on the inner side of the departing old. Nature illustrates externally precisely how spiritual operations are conducted. Leaves, dry, brown and withered, may hang on to trees all through a long and freezing winter, but when the influences of springtime begin vigorously to work, every one of these old leaves will drop away, to give place to the new foliage which is pushing its way outward from a hidden source within the tree. We do not see the root and the sap unless we are clairvoyant, but we see the results of powerful action taking place in some unseen laboratory. It is even so with our outer earth and all its material institutions. The occult realm, the region of inner conscious action, is the important region and we must not permit ourselves to think that we individually are not part and parcel of it, for while our external words and actions belong only to the domain of exterior visibility, our every desire and thought exerts some influence in the inner region.

and pushes forth toward inevitable physical expression. It is after all what we most deeply desire and that upon which we silently and secretly most continually dwell, that regulates the definite grade of influx that we receive from the spiritual world. Mere formal adhesion to rites and ceremonies accomplishes but very little indeed in shaping character or in relating us with unseen influences. More and more are thinkers coming to appreciate the profound philosophy contained in the often quoted words, "He is a Jew who is one inwardly and that is circumcision which is of the heart."

The weakness of so many religious bodies in these days, and also of organizations not technically religious, is that they carry a number of nominal adherents whose physical presence may be seen at stated gatherings, and who may even take active and seemingly efficient part in the work of the society which names them on its roll of membership, but spiritually they are no part of the assembly, therefore they afford it no interior support.

Any outward organization can be kept up financially so long as funds are forthcoming to sustain the fabric and meet current expenses, but we all know how lifeless is the atmosphere in any congregation where money sustains the por-

gramme of punctiliously regulated events, but where there is little, if any, heartiness in any of the proceedings.

A somewhat unusual amount of clairvoyant perspicuity is necessary to enable one to see the condition of affairs on the psychic side, but clair-sentience is so much commoner than either clairvoyance or clairaudience that numbers of sensitive persons feel very keenly what they neither see nor hear, and by that clairsentient faculty they often judge accurately of the actual spiritual state of affairs. That there is power in numbers and that enthusiasm kindles more enthusiasm we must all admit, but no enthusiast is other than one who feels deeply and loves sincerely, even though it be but for a brief period.

Whenever a new movement gets a good start and makes rapid headway, it is a manifestation of unseen forces vigorously operating on some inner place of endeavour. Nothing can be more interesting or more instructive to the earnest student of psychology than to trace the histories of prominent personages who have started movements and drawn around them coteries of followers including men and women of the most varied types and conditions.

It is always possible to throw some doubt upon records several centuries old, and when we are dealing with events which occurred thousands of years ago we must perforce admit that history is doubtful. Happily for our immediate purpose we have fresh material close at hand serving to illustrate exactly how movements are born on earth and how they grow up in our own midst in our own day. Modern Spiritualism spread like wildfire immediately after the phenomena at Hydesville in 1848, and we know how strongly the new manifestations appealed to persons of all types of mind and of all varieties of social position. Now though the names of the Fox Sisters are constantly mentioned wherever modern American Spiritualism is discussed, there was no movement started that could possibly have been styled Foxism, for the girls as they grew to womanhood never became acknowledged leaders, though they were constantly resorted to in their capacity of mediums of communication between two states of existence commonly called two worlds. Reading the literature of Spiritualism as it appeared in the fifties, sixties and seventies of the nineteenth century we find the claim constantly put forward by all the best writers, many of them authors of high merit, men

and women of more than average mental strength and culture, that these persons have themselves witnessed phenomena the genuineness of which they could not dispute, and furthermore we are informed in a number of striking instances that in private life and often through the instrumentality of members of their own families, various phases of mediumship spontaneously developed. Take for example the well-known instance of the popular writer, Mrs. Elsa Barker, who informs us definitely that Judge Hatch makes himself known to her and communicates information through her hand just as the long famous "Julia" communicated through the hand of William Stead.

When the Theosophical Society was founded in New York in 1875 not only were prominent Spiritualists among its charter members but its President Founder, Colonel Henry Steele Olcott, had recently published one of the most startlingly sensational accounts of spiritual phenomena ever issued in which he vouched for the genuineness of that most marvellous of all phases of phenomena, materialization. "People from the Other World" was the arresting title of the book, and though his close associate, Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, did not approve of cultivating mediumship, we have

no record that any denial was ever made of the facts recorded in that intensely thrilling volume.

It must be remembered that for a time there was bitter antagonism between extreme Spiritualists and extreme Theosophists, and probably some vestiges of mutual misunderstanding may continue indefinitely to exist; but there we must cry halt and take note of the fact that avowed Spiritualists and avowed Theosophists differ very widely among themselves and the most acrimonious controversies have been allowed to appear in public print in which prominent persons, leaders in their distinctive fields of action, have used language concerning each other which was no credit to whoever employed it.

Always at the root of these controversies is hero-worship of some extravagant and misguided type, and finally hero-worship perverted into vilification of some man or woman formerly idolized. If we pay any heed to the wise saying, "By their fruits ye shall know them," we need not hesitate a moment before characterizing the tree of personal idolatry as a pernicious plant, seeing that wherever its growth is encouraged, it yields ere long not the loving fruit of tender devotion to a beloved and honoured leader, which is some-

thing we can readily admire, but the poisonous fruit of hatred and vilification, because the clay feet of the supposedly all-gold idol have been discovered.

There is scarcely a single instance we can recall, of bitter hatred and cruel calumny being levelled against some prominent person where it has not followed upon a cringing sycophantic mental attitude. Some man or woman, or maybe even some unseen entity communicating through a medium, has been regarded as authoritative and infallible in an unqualified degree ; then has come an exposure of weakness or inaccuracy on the part of the adored oracle and forthwith worship has been changed into execration and the once venerated idol is now an object of scorn and hooting. The story of the French Revolution gives instances of the direful effect of the blind following of a priesthood to a point where the tide turned, and the priests were mercilessly maltreated by an infuriated mob who declared that they had been cruelly duped by these arrogant ecclesiastics and now they would take their revenge by extirpating them.

The fate of many a royal family has been tragic in the extreme, all as a result of the turn of a tide of blind worship into an equally forceful tide of

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relentless opposition. On the unseen side of things there has been a dissolution of a dominating sphere of influence, and what is called in the twelfth chapter of the Apocalypse "war in heaven" has been quickly followed by war on earth.

The religion of to-morrow will, in the language of the famous American quakeress Lucretia Mott, take TRUTH for AUTHORITY, not AUTHORITY for TRUTH. But a really grave difficulty arises at this very point, the difficulty experienced with every attempt to establish and sustain a democracy in place of an aristocracy.

Government of the people, for the people and by the people, is the magnificent democratic ideal. But can it be fully carried into effect? That it has not been in the past by no means proves that it will not be in the future. Prophets have always foretold a day of universal enlightenment when human equality would be demonstrated to the full, a day in which the essential divinity of human nature will shine forth in a fullness of majesty never previously beheld. It seems but fair to state that so far as we can discern the signs of the present times we are now entering upon a much nearer approximation to that glorious estate than any previous epoch has demonstrated, and the religion

of this oncoming Age may well harmonize in all particulars with the mighty truth involved in the words attributed to a Great Teacher, "If I say the truth, why do ye not believe me?" These words should be coupled with another splendid text, "He taught them as one having authority (within himself), and not as the scribes."

The higher spiritual spheres in contact with incarnate humanity are constituted of entities who have graduated out of sectarianism and limited patriotism into a true cosmopolitanism, but because of the universal scope of their sympathy they are by no means averse or hostile to a continuation of limited aggregations of affinitizing individuals such as Goethe called "elective affinities," so long as any good purpose can be served by such associations.

Patriotism, intense love of one's native land and determination to do everything possible to add to its success and glory, is by no means at variance with reasonable Internationalism. Interdenominationalism in religion appeals to many persons here and now to whom undenominationalism does not appeal, and as those who have graduated from lower to higher schools know of the uses of the academies they once frequented but frequent no

longer, so do the higher intelligences in unseen spheres comprehend and appreciate the place and use of lesser societies than those in which they are themselves now included.

We cannot escape from unseen influx ; we cannot go through the world as isolated units, but we can choose more and more as we advance along the pathway of progression with what associates we shall intimately ally ourselves.

The great bane of modern cults is that they almost invariably fall into the errors which have brought shame and confusion upon older cults, and the taproot of all confusion is personal idolatry, either setting up oneself or another (it virtually matters not which it be) as a dictator, for every dictator proves ultimately a barrier between the soul and God. Such men as Edward Carpenter and a few others whose self-confessions we delight to read, undoubtedly enjoy glimpses of cosmic consciousness and occasionally realize a mystic ecstasy. When we read their delightful narratives of individual experience we feel that they must indeed be in some close touch with a fountain-head of spiritual revelation which makes all exterior phenomena ultimately unnecessary. In these troublous reconstructionary times we need to

handle every question pertaining to leadership very delicately and skilfully, for though the goal in sight is the seat of authority in religion where James Martineau placed it, within the individual, there are many among us yet who must be aided to walk and who can now scarcely creep along the path which leads eventually to complete self-declaration and spiritual emancipation.

Guides, helpers, there must be ; but let these be simply and rightfully regarded as merely elder brothers and sisters in the family. We never truly help others any further than we help them to help themselves to ultimate self-reliance, and that statement holds fully as true with reference to the counsel we may receive out of the unseen as to the tutelage we can gain from our neighbours yet embodied in the flesh.

CHAPTER X

LOVE AND FEAR, LIBERTY AND LAW IN THE RELIGION OF TO-MORROW

HAVING considered in a general way several tendencies of thought and feeling in the religious world at present, we now desire to concentrate attention, definitely and specifically, upon what may well be regarded as the most important of all moot questions constantly arising in the minds of students of psychology and demanding a practical answer, as far as one can possibly be given, for the express purpose of improving our most defective methods of child-training, and our equally, if not still more, mistaken ways of handling those troublesome elements in society which are too often looked upon as so nearly worthless and incorrigible as to be fit subjects for nothing better than life-long incarceration in some house of detention where the influences are decidedly not calculated to lead the erring into the ways of righteousness.

Outspokenly do we utter our definite conviction

that no attitude opposed to ultimate Universalism can be healthful or uplifting, and we do not hesitate to affirm that there is not a scintilla of evidence procurable that any cruel methods of punishment tend in any other direction than to perpetuate criminal affections and tendencies, even though, by a degrading kind of fear, these unrighteous tendencies may be temporarily smothered or suppressed ; but everyone who exercises common sense knows perfectly well that suppression is not synonymous with eradication, and surely our desire must be to heal humanity of its diseases, not to let corruption fester and increase in special localities such as prisons and asylums for the insane, where the prevailing thought is that the inmates are in some hopeless condition of vice or insanity and that nothing better can be done for them than to keep them in durance vile indefinitely or permanently. This wretchedly erroneous method of dealing with "unfortunates" is in complete accord with the hideous doctrine of everlasting punishment which has for many centuries been one of the crying scandals of Christendom and an enormous drawback to much good that the Christian religion could often have accomplished in its own strongholds and also in non-Christian lands, had it not saddled itself

with the burden of this horrible nightmare of pessimistic superstition of the most depressing type.

The much less repulsive doctrine of conditional immortality, now very widely promulgated where endless misery was formerly proclaimed, is by no means an effective spur to the noblest efforts, for it always throws a damper upon one's exuberant spiritual energies by suggesting that some souls whom one is endeavouring to succour may be classifiable among the "finally impenitent" who must be destroyed because there is no virtue or saving grace within them; still this prevailing theological phantasy is something to be thankful for as a half-way house to the glorious philosophy of universal elevation which must become the unifying faith of our surely enlightening humanity.

Were we only sufficiently enlightened to see through the clouds of error which veil the beauty of the human spirit in myriad instances we should have no difficulty in understanding how readily the world's greatest spiritual instructors and emancipators have perceived the essential good behind the accidental evil even in the darkest cases.

The problem of Good and Evil is by no means so difficult of solution as is frequently supposed; nor is it hard to understand how the Parsees can teach

absolute Goodness supreme in the Universe and at the same time advocate a dualistic doctrine attributing all the beautiful and pleasant things in this world to Ormuzd and everything dark and disagreeable to Ahriman.

Ormuzd and Ahriman, according to the Zend-Avesta, are brothers who have had a temporary disagreement, and so long as they remain at variance one will act continually in contradiction to the other, but, said Zoroaster, according to the highest Parsee tradition, there will come a day when these brothers will be completely reconciled and then will strife cease upon the earth. The actual fact of confusion at present on this much-afflicted planet no one can possibly dispute, and unless we determine to take some purely abstract metaphysical position like that assumed by Christian Scientists theoretically, we cannot conceivably deny that there are many conditions far from ideal which have to be faced and handled resolutely. But mentioning the *practical* attitude taken by Christian Scientists we find that they make much of healing ministries and have a great deal to say about truth destroying error; consequently when it comes to an actual working program Christian Scientists and Universalists need not stand very far apart. The most

vital of all questions is the ever pressing query, What do we need to do to improve existing conditions in the world where we are called to work continuously? Incurable diseases and incorrigible vices are unknown to the Christian gospel, but multitudes of cases are seemingly incurable and incorrigible simply because our sight is so dim and our apprehension of truth so painfully inadequate that we do not see that any remedy exists, therefore if we are careless in speech and by no means profound in philosophy we are very apt to employ a terminology in flat contradiction to many of the grandest sayings attributed to a Master which we are quite willing to hear read more or less impressively from the lecterns of our churches.

There can be no reconciliation between diametrically opposed propositions such as universal salvation and the final destruction of the impenitent, for the simple reason that final impenitence is an unthinkable proposition when one has accepted the glorious affirmation that all souls are essentially one and that at the core of being there is nowhere aught but goodness.

The whole dividing line between two contradictory theories of human nature, and resultantly between two advocated methods of appealing to

those who need restraint as well as correction, is found in the following opposing postulates. The essential goodness of human nature universal and ineradicable, which is the contention of the consistent Universalist, and the dogma of the innate depravity of human nature which lies at the root of all those hurtful practices which are still indulged with a view to hold the depraved in check and prevent gross outrages upon respectable society. A very large majority of religious teachers advocate equally appeals to love and to fear, and within certain limits they are no doubt justified; for up to a certain stage in the evolution of moral consciousness we can only appeal effectively (in any immediate manner to secure quick results) to those instincts which are already active in those with whom we have to deal.

True though it be that deep down in the heart of every human being reposes a love of the good, the beautiful, the true, it is externally a fact that those sublime affections are not yet aroused in the majority of undeveloped individuals, morally speaking, whom we are obliged to handle somewhat strenuously for the sake of protecting society at large from injury. An appeal to fear of punishment is a low appeal, and it probably never really does

anything to awaken any noble sentiment in the threatened individual, but it does often deter from the commission of many offences outwardly. Here we confront a mighty ethical problem. If we are satisfied with mere opportunism, and are content with handling trying situations in a superficial manner so as to reduce manifest friction and improve surface situations, we can go on appealing to fear and cow many a child and many an adult into unwilling submission to some not unreasonable commandment which otherwise he would not heed ; but if by development of character we understand anything deeper than mere conformity with external regulations of a moral order, we have to face the issue that these outward conformists who conform only through fear of punishment, are inwardly determined nonconformists.

We are, through fear of punishment, leading our submissive satellites, or any who are in mental bondage to our dictates, to live a dangerous double life ; an outside life of respectable conformity with moral usages and an interior life of protest against the very morality which they outwardly profess. Have we not here a perfect picture of a hypocrite, and is not hypocrisy denounced more than any outward viciousness in the gospel records ?

Whenever some terrible outbreak of crime startles and horrifies usually complacent respectable society, we are simply being made aware that slumbering volcanic fires may at any time burst forth in active dangerous eruptions. We pay a heavy penalty over and over again for our manufacture of hypocrites when outbursts of anarchy appal the smug self-satisfied members of a professedly religious community where church-going has been the rule rather than the exception, but where the turbulent passions of an inwardly violent element in the community have been held in temporary leash only by fear of dire penalty in this world or in a world to come, if one transgresses outwardly the moral order.

The theological portrayal of an endless hell of misery, far from lending reasonable countenance to appeals to fear of awful penalty for transgression, gives the case entirely into the hands of those who declare that appeals to love are alone radically and permanently efficacious, for, stated bluntly, the doctrine of hopeless continuous misery is a striking illustration of the utter absurdity of tormenting people for any purpose, for those benighted theologians who invented the dogma of endless misery frankly declared that neither devils nor men in hell

would improve to all eternity. What a shocking travesty upon the character of the false deity whom those fanatics set up as an object of supreme adoration and confounded with the Father in Heaven of whom the Beloved Son is said to have spoken in terms of endearing tenderness.

Truly has it been said that an honest man is the noblest work of God with which we are acquainted, and it is by no means less true to declare that it takes an honest man to form an honest concept of Deity. Harsh-tempered men and women, who are living as yet only on the animal plane of existence, may be devoutly religious ; they may feel a burning zeal for the honour of the being whom they worship as the one sole Deity, but as they see God through the haze of their own animality, they attribute to God the same barbaric sentiments and feelings which they encourage in themselves. They allow themselves to express wrath continually, and they often boast of the cruel manner in which they have retaliated upon those who have offended them, then, because they consider vengeance a magnificent quality in themselves, they speak of Divine vengeance as being the same in quality, but immeasurably greater in extent than is their own.

It is impossible to surrender belief in some vengeful deity while we encourage vindictive impulses in ourselves; we are therefore perpetually confronted with the question of appearances which contradict reality in records of religious experiences.

There has been so much wreaking of vengeance in the world of late, and so utterly unsatisfactory has been the outcome of harsh punitive measures in many places, that a radical change in methods of dealing with the so-called "criminal class" has come into vogue rapidly.

Extreme sentimentalism has lifted up its voice and pleaded, unwisely no doubt, for a complete abolition of all penalties, and many kind-hearted sentimentalists have taken to treating criminals as though they were extremely interesting specimens of humanity whose variation from general type entitles them simply to an unusual amount of tender consideration. Though we cannot endorse this new attitude, we can readily account for it as an inevitable rebound and intense reaction from the harsh measures which these sentimental courses are advocated to supplant. In some instances much good may be done by the ministrations of some exceptionally tender-hearted man or woman

who makes a pet of a criminal and overpowers him with kindness ; but we do not think that method would succeed in many instances, for heroic moral treatment may be sometimes necessary ; but it must never be cruel and it must be undertaken solely with the object in view of elevating the one to whom it is administered.

In cases where the ultra-sympathetic methods prove successful (and sometimes they do succeed), we find on closer analysis that the persons benefited in this sentimental manner have long been victims of starved and perverted affections. It often happens that a man who is now a criminal was originally a bright affectionate impulsive lad with high ambitions, the son of stern parents who drove him from home to punish him for some youthful escapade or because he refused to comply with some parental order which appeared to him unjust. The whole surging tide of passionate revolt against this cruel expulsion from home, and the disgrace attaching to it, transformed the boy for a time into a foe of humanity ; he thirsted for revenge upon a society which had pitilessly mangled him, and as he followed a dissolute career and heedlessly, when not intentionally, fell into all kinds of mischief, he landed ere long in prison, and there, in company

with much older men far more hardened than himself, and cut off from all association with truly elevating influences, he grew inwardly so perverted that he believed there was no good in himself or in anybody. When a man reaches the point where he believes in evil as a reality and good as a chimera he is self-justified for making no effort to rise out of his low condition, because he cannot see that there is any rising power within him or any heights which he can rise to. Here we have an instance of a once warm-hearted, high-spirited youth crushed and perverted by undue severity. Need we wonder, then, that if some one comes into his life and treats him in an extremely opposite manner from that which drove him down, that he should at once respond to the new appeal and become a convert to ways of righteousness through the ministry of love?

A man in such a sorry plight as one who has been thrust forth by cruel censure and often complete misjudgment cannot possibly be helped by further scolding, therefore the directly contradictory method of exaggerated sentimentality, which we grant is a departure from the golden mean of perfect equilibrium, serves as a counter-active agent and antidotes the effect of undue severity as an alkali will counteract the action of an acid.

As we are none of us all-wise, and therefore none among us can be certain that we can take the Shakesperian "pound of flesh" which is our due without shedding blood which is not our due, it is best for us in all doubtful circumstances to err, if err we must, on gentle mercy's side. "Retribution belongeth unto me; I will repay saith the Eternal," is a noble translation of a fine Hebrew text, generally spoiled in part in our vernacular because translators have inserted the word *vengeance* where *retribution* is clearly implied in the original. American Universalists do not hesitate to publish in their Confession of Faith the following sentences in the following order :—

"The Certainty of Retribution for Sin.
The Final Harmony of all souls with God."

Now there is nothing vindictive in retribution which is corrective chastisement. Remedial penalties, even though they sometimes seem severe and necessitate much temporary suffering, are by no means at variance with perfect love and wisdom. To bring children up in a Fool's Paradise to believe that no matter what they do they will never reap any distressing consequences, or to encourage them to hug the delusion that no matter how they live on

earth they will go straight to a blissful heaven immediately they drop their present physical bodies, would be an act of cruelty, for it would be practising upon them a gross mental deception and giving them no ethical training whatsoever. There is a right as well as a wrong kind of fear, and though perfect love casts out fear, until that perfect love arrives in consciousness fear has some needful work to do.

But the higher meaning of the word translated fear in many portions of the Bible rightly signifies respect and reverence. That "fear of the Lord" which in Proverbs we are told is "the beginning of wisdom" means reverence for righteousness, and without this "holy fear" all unholy dread of penalty can at best and utmost do no more than tend to a cleansing of the outsides of vessels which within continue filled with all manner of uncleanness.

Precisely at this point we are confronted with the relation between Law and Liberty. To many minds Law is a word of ominous sound and far from welcome import. Even the *categorical imperative* of Immanuel Kant fails to arouse the emotion of affection, for there is nothing charming or alluring in a stern You Must and You Must Not, yet that is the echo of the Universe.

Recent popular studies in Comparative Religion and especially the influence of the Oriental doctrine of Karma,—literally the law of inevitable sequence of events,—which has been industriously exerted by the Theosophical Society and by the ministrations of Hindu teachers in Europe and America,—has led to a wide discountenancing of old-fashioned theories concerning the forgiveness of sins, and though multitudes of people still repeat the Apostles' Creed in church which contains the affirmation "I believe in the forgiveness of sins," they are well within their rights, be they clerics or laymen, if they add on their own account "but not in the remission of penalty." It is exactly at this point that confusion reigns in multitudes of minds, and it ought not to be very difficult to clear the mental horizon sufficiently to show that to forgive sin originally meant to forgo it, to get rid of it. To remit penalties and to allow vice to continue unchecked would be to exert a highly demoralizing tendency in any community, and it is not conceivable that a Saviour ever comes into the world with any lower object than saving from sin, not from its consequences. It is exactly here that Christianity, Judaism, and the Oriental Religions can meet on something like common ground. There

is no place for vicarious atonement in Judaism or in any Oriental creed ; but there is no doctrine of vicarious atonement taught in any one of the four evangelists.

It was from the laboured arguments in the Epistles, never from the Gospels, that scholastic theologians gradually evolved their plans of salvation and schemes of redemption, which bear no resemblance to the far simpler teaching ascribed to the Founder of Christianity.

" His name shall be called Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins " is a simple declaration of an important part of a messianic mission in no sense discordant with Israelitish ideals and prophecies.

The Hebrew name *Joshua* is so nearly identical with *Jesus* that there are instances in the King James version of the New Testament where translators have manifestly confounded them. *Joshua* means a guide, deliverer, emancipator, and the highest emancipation must ever be from all that the word *sin* signifies. To deliver from sin is to guide humanity into ways of righteousness and paths of peace.

Now while no one can be another's substitute, one can certainly be another's helpful guide. If

"evil communications corrupt good manners," and they certainly do, then good communications must be the antidote to evil manners. Salvation from sin is accomplishable through a twofold ministry, *viz.* a powerful appeal to love of right coupled with a clear intellectual setting forth of the way of righteousness.

There is a purely demonstrative or mathematical theory of the work of a Deliverer from sin which appeals very strongly indeed to persons in whom intellect takes precedence of emotion; and there is a purely loving theory of salvatory influence which lays hold immediately upon the affections of those in whom emotion is dominant over intellect.

To set a noble example and bid others follow it is of course extremely helpful, but no amount of intellectual demonstration reaches the affections of all humanity. It is the appeal of love and that alone which will lead multitudes to forsake their sins and live virtuously henceforward.

We find illustrations of this vital truth in daily life at every turn, and we trace the pitiable failure of very many well-intentioned and highly intellectual schemes for social betterment to a conspicuous lack of palpable affection. Cold systems wrought

out with mechanical precision do not usually touch any hearts though they appeal to many heads. Consequently they serve a good mental use and help considerably in cases where all that is really needed is to show a more excellent way to persons hitherto ignorant of that better road. To preach a stern doctrine of Immutable Order; to harp insistently upon Changeless Law, may convince the intellect but it cannot arouse the affections. The inadequacy of a large amount of so-called Theosophical teaching, derived almost exclusively from certain Oriental sources, is due to the fact that we hear a great deal about the "wheel of the law," and the "working out of karma," which is doubtless essentially true, but it is uncheered and unlighted by the warmth and sunshine of a doctrine of forgiving love. Sir Rabindranath Tagore has done a very great deal to bring the best elements in Eastern and in Western philosophy and theology together, and to a large extent he has bridged an immense chasm by his sympathetic appreciation of Oriental and Occidental teachers and teachings simultaneously. Sir Edwin Arnold paved the way for a perfect unification of the best in Asiatic thought with the best in Christian theology, but few teachers so far have undertaken to formulate a philosophy

which logically includes the two and shows their essential inseparability.

The absurd notion that Law and Liberty are antithetical and mutually exclusive, is one of those crazy phantasies of sciolism which has no justification in reason or in the experiences of common life. Law is a term we employ to signify that all events move in a regular order; that for every effect there must be an adequate or efficient cause; therefore many miraculous occurrences may frequently take place under our observation, but the miraculous is simply the wonder-inducing, that at which we greatly marvel, merely because we do not know how the observed phenomena are produced or from what origin they proceed. Were there no regular order in the Universe, there could be no possible science nor could there be any feeling of security. We are living in the midst of events which we have the power to change at any moment by increasing the sum of our knowledge. In this experimental laboratory in which we are now working we are learning new lessons every hour, and we have only to carry the scientific spirit into the domain of moral and spiritual life to make the discovery that we can become whatsoever we will to become, not simply by wishing it, but by carrying

our desires into effect through the application of principles discoverable if not yet (by us) discovered. The Ten Commandments constituting the Hebrew Decalogue may well be considered with an eye to their future interpretation more as assurances than as arbitrary enforcements ; but it must always depend upon the state of mind of the one who hears a precept whether he will consider it in its interior spiritual aspect or in its literal mandatory form.

The Israelitish ideal is a Holy Nation, zealous for good works. Now it stands to reason that if a company of people keep themselves purer than the rest of mankind they will enjoy immunities from pestilence and many other blessings which can be shared by Gentiles equally with Jews provided the same course of action is followed by all alike.

The spiritually aristocratic Israelite is inclined to boast of his observance of a Divine Law which the majority of mankind have not received or heeded ; but Israel has a mission, and that is to spread the knowledge of this priceless treasure broadcast on earth that all humanity may share in the blessings of this most valuable of all possessions.

Thomas Huxley completely settled the question of the authority of one out of the Ten Commandments when he declared that we might not know

anything about Mount Sinai literally and the wonderful volcanic phenomena described in Exodus, supposed to have occurred about 3500 years ago, but we find, said he, that if we steal to-day we throw society into confusion, therefore the command is imperative, *Thou shalt not steal*. A simply rational view of the Decalogue, far from discountenancing it, leads us to become convinced that it must have a noble origin by reason of the glorious fruit it bears when we regard its precepts and obey them, and the direful consequences which follow upon courses of action at variance therewith. To judge all trees by the fruit they actually bear is to heed a Master's counsel, not to run counter to any gospel injunction, therefore if Christians of to-day encourage their rationalistic speculations to the full, and cast all the doubts they please upon the historical accuracy of ancient narratives, they can clear away a vast amount of cumbersome material which has always given rise to bewildering controversy and accept a Here and Now demonstration of Law working incessantly in the Universe regardless of whether any venerated record is to be taken literally or otherwise.

"Where the Spirit of the Lord is there is Liberty" by no means implies that Liberty has supplanted

Law; on the contrary it signifies that we have become so enlightened spiritually that to observe the Law is our delight. We grow to render loving obedience with the full consent of our will and understanding working in complete co-operative harmony. No spiritually illuminated individual obeys the commands that forbid stealing and bearing false witness and coveting a neighbour's possessions from a sense of hard stern obligation, for there is no wish to covet, no desire to steal, no inclination to bear false witness in any enlightened man or woman; therefore the Law is no longer an outside prompter or commander but has become an interior director. Sin ceases whenever one can no longer contemplate a sinful act with pleasure, but so long as one would like to indulge unneighbourly propensities it is a good thing that there is an outward moral code to forbid such illicit actions.

Blessedness, which includes happiness but is greater than what we ordinarily mean by happiness, is a condition in which Divine Law is carried out in human life spontaneously. In Leviticus we are told that they are *accursed* who cause the blind to go out of the way, and who in various directions act in direct contradiction to the precept called the Golden Rule. In the Sermon on the Mount we are

informed that they are *blessed* who love righteousness, whose hearts are pure and who are makers of peace. One statement is as true as the other, and it rests with us to decide whether we will take the curse or accept the blessing. One course of action leads to inevitable misery; an opposite course leads to equally inevitable bliss. As we come to know this we are free to act in such a manner as to secure the richest conceivable benefits ourselves and instruct our less enlightened brethren how to secure them likewise. Law remains immutable; penalties for transgression are unremittable; but when we no longer transgress what have we to do with penalties? In a very true sense we are no longer "under" law as formerly; we are in a state of grace, which means truly that we have discovered the way of blessedness and gladly and gratefully walk therein.

The religion of to-morrow will be immensely freer of fear and fuller of love than is the religion of to-day, which is in a state of flux, getting rid of a great deal of erroneous accompaniment and suffering through a transitional period which causes great mental unrest to multitudes of doubting hearts and troubled minds.

It seems impossible to question the fact that we

are coming as peoples, even though it be but slowly and with much difficulty, to see that the way of the transgressor always must be hard, while wisdom's ways are paths of pleasantness and peace. Prophets of to-day, who are such in reality, are carrying the same mighty message as the ancient prophets bore.

Uncompromising is the cry, *Do this and thou shalt live*, but if thou doest the opposite then thou shalt surely die. At every turn we see the truth of this undeniable doctrine forcibly elucidated. Crime leads to destruction of any institution that generates and harbours it. Virtue tends to the growth and conservation of any institution that fosters it. We do not need so much to work and pray directly for Peace as for Righteousness, seeing that Peace is the delightful fruit that grows upon the tree of Righteousness.

Peace is a word that has often been sadly demeaned, for people have frequently spoken of keeping peace where there was none to keep.

Smothered indignation, repressed animosity, cannot be peace unless peace is a curse rather than a blessing. Wars come from this concealment of ill-feeling under the guise of a spurious peace. To cry peace where there is no peace is the act of a simpleton or a hypocrite. We must make peace, such peace

as we have never known before, and we can even give hearty assent to the old theological expression, we must make our peace with God.

The poetical book of Jonah says that man gets angry with God but God does not get angered with man, and in that statement there is a profound truth.

We cannot expect change of feeling in the Changeless One, therefore we cannot believe that any act of ours ever alters the attitude of Deity toward Humanity. Atonement is exactly the reverse of what erroneous theology has made it out to be; not a change in the attitude of the Parent to the children, but an alteration in the attitude of the children toward the universal Parent. The religion of to-morrow cannot endorse a contradictory absurdity and teach that the unchangeable can alter, therefore it will consistently aver that if we accept any doctrine of Divine immutability and its necessary corollary the steadfastness of moral order, our ever-increasing sense of the joy of liberty will not spring from so false a concept as that expressed in a familiar hymn—

"Free from the law, O happy condition,"

but freedom through knowledge of law and loving

LOVE AND FEAR, LIBERTY AND LAW 223
compliance with its precepts will secure our blessedness.

The old appeals to fear must grow less and less as knowledge grows from more to more, while the new appeals to love will more than compensate for any supposed loss of moral restraint which might follow upon the breaking down of the old terrors.

The awful war which so suddenly swept forth upon the world in the summer of 1914 proved how inwardly unpeaceful were many nations supposed to be at peace, and though war is indeed a dire calamity, and it can find no place among regenerated humanity, so long as there are hidden vices to be destroyed external conflicts will be inevitable.

We have all learned tremendous lessons through the sufferings entailed by warfare and along with war has blossomed forth sublime philanthropy, and much spiritual revelation has been granted and widely heeded.

Ella Wheeler Wilcox beautifully says that the only religion really needed is the art of being kind, and she is right if we only make it quite clear when we expatiate upon kindness that we firmly insist that equity is the foundation of kindness, for unless we are just in all our dealings one with the other

our seeming kindness may prove in an hour of trial little better than transitory sentimentality.

Love and Wisdom are eternally inseparable ; Justice and Mercy cannot abide, one without the other ; Severity and Mildness are two columns of a single arch. That all things work together for good in every instance we cannot reasonably doubt, and it is because for the working out of the " weight of glory " that is yet to be revealed we need a temporary discipline of suffering, that joy and sorrow, pain and pleasure, continue to mark our onward way till we have outgrown the need for the ministry of the Pairs of Opposites.

The essential goodness of all that is, or ever can be, is the rock on which alone can be built a Temple of Universal Religion, for it stands to reason that no compromises, concessions, or half-way houses can prove satisfying to the ever-increasing demand for a statement of religion on the part of the masses which will yield satisfaction to the affections and at the same time convince the intellect. That all modern cults will contribute their quota we may rest assured, but there is an ephemeral character about most contemporary movements which suggests that they are properly classifiable among Tennyson's " little systems," all of which have

their day and then pass on to give place to logical successors. "Broken lights" are all valuable and useful, but not permanently adaptable to the needs of advancing humanity. In this intensely experimental age we are experimenting constantly with new brands and varieties of religion, and we always find something helpful in the newest brand of theology and philosophy which comes into prominence and wins temporary popularity because of the good that it accomplishes. All the "great" religions of the world are too small to become universal, because all have walls of separation around them and all require of their strict adherents acceptance of certain doctrines which fall short of universality.

The coming religion must prove itself capable of handling and solving the most perplexing problems demanding solution. Methods must be tried out and proved effectual for stamping out crime and proving that religion is a driving force making for practical righteousness. All sorts and conditions of men, woman and children must be able to feel its uplifting and regenerating power regardless of the nationality which is specially their own.

Such a religion is undoubtedly operating powerfully in the higher realms unseen by mortal eyes,

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and we may reasonably expect it to come forth and show itself ere long as a veritable New Church fulfilling the dreams of all the seers who have foretold it, and it has been foretold unmistakably in many a clime by many a tongue. Such a religion must of necessity embrace the excellence of all existing cults without their limitations and imperfections. It may require the manifestation of an Avatar or World Teacher to start it on its way, but how that potent spiritual inaugurator will appear still remains a mystery. All attempts at definition so far have proved lamentable failures ; yet every prediction concerning the coming of a Messiah contains without doubt an element of truth. In various lands different teachers may be simultaneously influenced by the spiritual wave which will lave the planet ; so it may come to pass that everyone's limited anticipation will be sufficiently fulfilled to prove that it was far from groundless ; yet the great fact will immeasurably transcend all anticipations.

A noble army of prophets, a spiritual federation of united workers, can be readily conceived of, all testifying in the same essential manner to the same fundamental verities and all working along the same general lines for human elevation. It will be

this united testimony to the outpouring of the Spirit of Truth that will bring the nations into an entirely new accord, for each distinctive people can drink rich draughts of inspiration through a channel distinctively its own. The new missionary spirit will be entirely different from the old, for the New Age missionary will go forth not as a proselytizer but as a unifier. We cannot wonder at the hostility displayed towards missionaries who seek to overthrow the historic faiths of ancient peoples and turn them to an alien creed ; but hostility in the days now dawning will not be offered to the missioner who succeeds in showing the world that all the great and little systems which have so long divided men externally are offshoots from a single root. The abiding root is about to thrust forth new branches to take the place of the withered boughs which have gradually died and cannot longer serve their former purpose.

None need regret the passing of what needs must pass, for in this case in exceptional degree will the words of Emerson apply where he tells us that when the angels depart it is because archangels are arriving.

Many familiar forms and practices will doubtless disappear, but that which comes in will be so much

more beautiful than that which goes out that we shall have no cause to regret the disappearance of many once familiar objects.

When visitors come to our shores in the days about to dawn they will not be shown prisons, insane asylums, barracks, and all manner of saddening institutions as sights to be exhibited and often to be gloried in as the native pompously describes their size, the number of their inmates and the cost of their erection and maintenance to the bewildered foreigner.

The new religion will not support any such institutions as now disfigure lands where civilization is supposed to have reached its highest present level. Too wise are we becoming in the light of fresh spiritual revelations to longer advocate crowding persons together whose influence when thus congested forms a sphere which breeds the very errors the expensive institution is intended to counteract. No two criminals and no two insane persons should ever be put together. If we are to reform, elevate and heal, we must take the victims of disorder as far away as possible from neighbours in the same condition as themselves and employ them in the healthiest and most useful manner possible under direction of exceptionally sane and moral overseers.

Crime is a disease requiring expert antidotal treatment for its extirpation, and insanity is the same.

OVERCOME EVIL WITH GOOD needs to become a motto translated into definite resolute action, therefore as LOVE IS THE FULFILLING of the LAW, we hesitate not to affirm that the Law of Love made clearly manifest will beget the Love of Law to such an extent that lawlessness will be rendered obsolete, sheerly and solely by actual proof that to obey the Good Law is to secure every blessing. To make virtue so attractive that it allures by its own intrinsic charms is the mission of every true reformer.

CHAPTER XI

REINCARNATION AND KARMA

THE kindred doctrines—Reincarnation and Karma—so industriously advocated by many Theosophists, and widely accepted far beyond the confines of any special organization, serve to provoke deep thought in many enquiring circles as to the part they will be likely to play in shaping what we are presuming to call the Religion of To-morrow.

It is a well-known fact that though these doctrines have recently been largely imported from India, and have therefore been presented to the Western world in a somewhat strange and foreign garb, they are by no means the exclusive property of Hindu cults. Karma is indeed a Sanscrit word and may therefore be regarded as an Asiatic product, but the great idea which it is intended to embody is so well-nigh universal that it would be absurd to haggle over the word when its significance is of such

tremendous size and importance, and it also happens to be a short convenient term to employ when one might otherwise be obliged to use a sentence.

Primitive Christianity was honeycombed with the idea of reincarnation, and it may safely be affirmed that nearly all the early Fathers of the Church taught the pre-existence of the soul even if they did not all emphasize repeated terrestrial embodiments. It was not till the fourth century that there was any wide condemnation of the doctrine on the part of ecclesiastics, and we know that that fateful century sealed the doom of much that was beautiful in the faith and practice of the Church of the first three centuries, for it was the time of the establishment of a dominant prelatrical hierarchy which united temporal power with spiritual authority and sought to compel all minds to submit to the iron sway of hard crystallized dogmatic diction.

With the reign of externalized ecclesiastical despotism Gnosticism was retired to privacy, and all persons entertaining views contrary to the ruling party were either silenced or made to suffer in various ways if they expressed their views at all openly.

We all know that no one can place an embargo on thought ; thought is always free to an extent

frequently unimagined, and serious persons entertaining similar views are certain to devise some means for communication with each other. Secret societies, teaching far more reasonable and liberal doctrines than were outwardly professed, have always existed within the Christian Church itself, and outside its fellowship numerous fraternities have always carried on their quiet work of mutual study of the Mysteries.

The doctrine of the soul as an immortal entity is extremely ancient, how ancient no one may positively tell. The Hermetic philosophy of Egypt, antedating the Gnosticism of Greece, had many points of contact with distinctively Oriental philosophies, but it seems that every age and country has to some extent coloured the leading doctrines of its main philosophies, so that we find many variations in statement of a doctrine which at root is found to be identical the planet over.

In these days we can readily approach the doctrines of Reincarnation and Karma through two distinct avenues of enquiry : (1) What is there in these allied doctrines to commend them to our intelligence and our demand for universal equity ? (2) What are the evidences (if any) to be drawn from individual experiences ?

To the philosophic mind the first consideration often suffices, for many people are mentally satisfied that these doctrines are fundamentally true without claiming to possess any evidence of importance drawn from reminiscences which we readily admit are often confused and hazy.

The number of adherents to these ancient doctrines in the Western world has enormously increased of late, and with the breaking up of other far less satisfactory theories of the human soul, its origin and destiny, we may well expect that the number who will come to accept these doctrines in the near future will be far greater than it is at present.

We must remember that until quite recently multitudes of religious people all over Christendom took their religion entirely on trust, and if they were asked how they could account for the anomalies of existence, or how they could harmonize a multitude of perplexing phenomena with the wisdom and goodness of the Almighty in whom they professed devoutly to believe, they would evade an answer by referring to the undeniable fact that there are many mysteries surrounding us not yet made plain, and light may be shed upon these in another and higher world than the one in which we are now working.

Any rational intellect at once perceives that such a statement leaves the case entirely open for any fresh light that may be thrown upon the hitherto unfathomed mysteries, therefore hospitable welcome has often been given readily to broader views of life than any previously entertained by many of these truly religious people who are now waking up intellectually in response to the immense mental stimulus afforded by the conditions of these exceptionally stirring times.

That the eternal fate of a human soul can be determined by a single earthly lifetime, as earthly lifetimes variously run, seems so utterly incredible that we wonder how any thinking person can entertain the theory for an instant. This world is spoken of constantly as a school for eternity. We are placed here, we are told, to undergo discipline to fit us for a better life beyond ; we are counselled to welcome earthly trials and temptations as means whereby our mettle can be tested. All of such teaching seems perfectly reasonable ; but soon we encounter an entirely opposite doctrine taught in the same religious denominations, for we find thankfulness expressed, particularly in hymns, that certain little children have been called away to a state of existence where it is presumed they

will have no trials and temptations to encounter for all eternity.

In the doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church we are told much of heroic sanctity, and we are invited to give thanks for the victories of saints and counselled to imitate as far as possible their spiritual heroism ; but we are also told of multitudes of children passing away in infancy who are everlastingly consigned to Limbo, a condition by no means terrible to contemplate, but one in which no opportunity is ever afforded for developing sanctity and attaining to the glory of the Beatific Vision.

Now if all individuals born on earth were placed in equivalent, not necessarily in identically the same surroundings, and all were given an equal opportunity to work out their glorification through encounters with the trying discipline of earth, it might seem plausible that a single earthly experience would suffice in every instance ; but as the case now stands we know of no other theory than that of successive earthly embodiments which in any way largely harmonizes with that magnificent concept so frequently asseverated : "God is no respecter of persons."

Not only do we find individuals on widely different levels of attainment but whole races represent

similar differences ; what then can be more acceptable to our sense of justice and fair play than to argue that those who are now near the foot of the ladder on earth should be given an opportunity of climbing to its summit, while those who are now near the topmost round must have done their own climbing in earlier existences ?

At the World's Fair held in Saint Louis, U.S.A., in 1904, among the many curious ethnological exhibits was a company of very small people, not more than three feet in height, called Negritoës. They subsisted chiefly on uncooked flesh and were capable of responding to appeals to their intelligence to only a very limited extent. If they are expressed human souls in very early embodiments then their condition is easily accounted for, and they present no bewildering problem to the anthropologist, but throw light upon the question of gradual human evolution. Reincarnationists, to put the matter very plainly and concisely, accept the idea of individual human evolution included within the wider circle of race evolution.

If each human soul is an entity and capable of making progress as such, then no such phrase as Group Soul can apply to a company of human beings though it may well apply in sub-human regions. A

group of souls is a phrase we may well employ when dealing with some special section or grouping of humanity, and while the group and the race evolves, that is, unfolds from within outward as a race or group, so does every individual unit in the mass evolve likewise. Without involution there can be no thinkable evolution, for *evolvere*, from which we derive *evolve* and *evolution*, means simply to unroll.

We may readily conceive of the essential equality of all souls and then contemplate the immense variety of human expressions now on earth in the light of a philosophy which assures us that we are all at the present instant learning some particular lesson and doing some specific work, and as we are widely apart in developed expression in many instances some are manifesting immensely more intelligence than others.

The doctrine of Karma simply stands unequivocally for the unalterable relation between an acting cause and an inevitable effect. Of course it must be granted that if we live a series of progressive lives on earth, each being in a very real sense supplementary to its predecessor, in our earlier embodiments we have far less power to shape events than we enjoy in later lives, because there must be knowledge of the relation of cause and

effect in every instance to enable one to deliberately set the cause in motion which will produce a desired effect. This is so completely obvious in every relationship of life that it seems impossible to doubt it. Knowledge gives power and knowledge is fruit of experience ; consequently every added experience must bring forth some addition to our sum of knowledge and therefore to the extent of our possible liberty.

It is frequently maintained by those Spiritualists who refuse to accept the idea of education through reincarnation that there are ample opportunities for learning all we need to learn in spirit-life, therefore a return to earth would be unnecessary. That we do both learn and work during the long and interesting intervals which occur between incarnations must be fully allowed, but no new work is begun, nothing is actually started in the spirit-world. This assertion by no means contradicts an immense mass of testimony received concerning conditions of existence and nature of activity in post-mortem states. We are told constantly that we go on doing what we most loved to do on earth ; that work that we may have just commenced when we are called out of the physical body we shall continue to perform in the psychic realm or on the

astral plane. The fact that all this testimony can be received at its full value by no means interferes with the doctrine of reincarnation, for we shall not re-enter the material world through another external birth until we have completed the work pertaining to our present embodiment, which is very much greater on its psychical than on its physical side. The glib use of such words as *forever*, *everlasting*, and others supposedly identical in meaning with *never-ending*, produces much unsound substitute for rational philosophy, and even the word *eternal* often gets included in the loosely handled catalogue until we begin to see that there was some justification for the very unusual phrase "twelve eternities," which occurs in a book said to have been inspired from some exalted spiritual centres, "The Principles of Nature," by Maria King. Those "twelve eternities" are easily resolvable into ages or dispensations which have frequently been confounded with unending periods, as they were not by the writer, who used a peculiar expression to convey a by no means unusual thought. The doctrine of reincarnation having been arbitrarily banished from Christian teaching after the first few centuries, and much of the old phraseology remaining, though often changed decidedly for the worse,

the idea gained currency in Christendom that when we leave our present earthly bodies we enter upon a fixed condition, even though there be progress in that state of fixity ; by which we mean that though the thought of advancement along the established line has never been even seriously questioned, there is supposed to be no getting off from one moral track on to another in the unseen world, though we can always repent and be converted so long as we inhabit a fleshly tabernacle. In that doctrine, so vigorously preached in many parts of Christendom, we find the germ of the phraseology of the doctrine of reincarnation transferred to a new and by no means reasonable or attractive setting. The life between incarnations is a life along a certain line determined by the choice made and the pursuits intentionally followed while in the flesh, and that life will continue until it comes naturally to its end. Whatever has a definite beginning in time can have an equally definite ending in time. This is a reasonable philosophic postulate.

The great doctrine of the unalterable relation between causes and effects has its Christian proof text in the well-known saying in the New Testament : " Be not deceived, God is not mocked ; whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap." There

could not well be a more definite and all-including statement of the fundamental of the Karmic idea, for the word whatsoever is as widely inclusive as any in our language.

We are accustomed to dwell so very much upon heredity and environment as the two great sources whence we derive everything with which we start out in life, and almost all that influences us throughout our entire earthly career, that we are inclined to accept a kind of Fatalism which is a relentless foe to individual initiative. Now just as the average Occidental has fallen a victim to some erroneous views of heredity and environment so have multitudes of Orientals fallen a prey to a prevailing misinterpretation of Karma. Students of astrology continually make the pitiful mistake of supposing that their fate is registered in advance among the planets, and that all they can do is to resign themselves with the best grace possible to a supposed inevitable. Far from the doctrine of Karma, when rightly understood and fairly applied, teaching that man is a mere creature of outside influences, it announces to every one of us that we are arbiters of our own fate, for the operation of universal law on all planes of manifestation is the same at core. Sir Edwin Arnold in "The Light of Asia" ex-

plained Karma very fully by using obvious illustrations, such as "the corn was corn, the sesamum was sesamum" and "the wheel the ox behind," a telling allusion to the Indian ox-cart. We may be so situated that we see only the revolving wheel and not the animal pulling the cart, or we may see only the ox and not the cart or any portion of it. If we see only the ox, we see the cause which is producing an effect which we do not see; if we see only the wheel turning, we behold an effect the cause of which is by us unperceived. If we see the ox and the cart together we may understand the relation between cause and effect to so wide an extent that life can never be again as problematical as formerly. It must be laid to the credit of all who are now making an honest endeavour to bring the excellencies of Oriental and Occidental religion and philosophy together, that they are in no way comparable with such missionary propagandists as seek to convert the people of the East to the faith and thought of the West, or *vice versa*.

We do not need to be told that there is degradation in India, for everyone admits it, nor are we ignorant of the fact that Hindus have often taken advantage of perverted views and misapplications of their great ancestral faiths to excuse their

negligence in looking properly after material affairs. But each section of the planet in these days which will rejoice in the true spiritual revival, and something more than a mere revivification, must admit its own limitations and be ready to accept with thankfulness all the help that is procurable by studying and assimilating the excellences contained within the prevailing philosophies of other lands. It therefore follows obviously that it cannot be that the West is "going over" to the creed of the East, or that the East is "going over" to the creed of the West, as the religion of to-morrow is undergoing definite formation.

The highly excellent services rendered to the thinking world at large by Sir Rabindranath Tagore and other enlightened Asiatics who sympathize with his breadth of sympathetic comprehension can hardly be over-estimated, because such services help the man or woman of not more than average intelligence or scholarship to perceive a basis of unity on which all true lovers of equity and well-wishers to humanity as a whole can stand together. The characteristic weakness of the East has been its too great proneness to dilate upon enormous periods of time extending to almost incalculable ages, while the typical error of the West has been

undue insistence upon the brevity of opportunity. If we can strike an even balance between these two extremes we shall have succeeded in bringing together two equally important, but directly opposite, necessary elements in a comprehensive philosophy. The Occident delights in quoting such bracing texts as "Now is the accepted time; now is the day of salvation," and such helpful mottoes as "Never put off till to-morrow what can be done to-day." These famous sayings are in perfect accord with an acknowledgment that we live a series of graded lives and that each life is the outcome of its predecessor and the protagonist of its successor.

If we are reaping to-day what we have previously sown then we shall assuredly reap to-morrow what we are sowing to-day; therefore the present instant is always a moment when the power of good can be so set in motion that it will begin to undermine any structure of evil which may be at present in expression.

Absolutely there can be only good; but relatively good and evil continually beset us until good finally destroys evil, in the sense that discords are all resolvable into harmonies. If we made mistakes in the past, and have therefore entered our present incarnation with certain definite weaknesses and

unpleasant tendencies, it is surely not for us to weakly excuse ourselves by referring everything to *Karma* which many of our neighbours will refer to *heredity*, and then cultivating moroseness and self-pity and constantly whining about our inability to rise out of conditions into which we were born. If you believe that you have lived before, and that something you did in a former life has resulted in your finding yourself in precisely the trying conditions in which you now are circumstanced, then if you take the helpful view of the great doctrine of Karma it will stimulate you with the conviction that you require, the discipline of getting out, by your own efforts, of the low estate in which you are now existing and that your opportunity lies now and here to overcome by present wiser action the results of old-time folly.

How anyone can possibly prefer to think that all his trials come upon him solely in consequence of the indiscretions of his ancestors, than that he has had an individual share in bringing them upon himself, surpasses the comprehension of those to whom the doctrine of that perfect equity which the law of Karma encloses appeals as harmonizing with the joint demands of intellect and emotion universally.

That souls are in groups, and therefore no one is entirely responsible for his individual condition, is a reasonable postulate. We none of us come into the world unaided, and during our earthly lives not one is dependent exclusively upon individual exertion ; but this teaching illustrates the operation of a law of joint responsibility for collective action, but offers no sanction whatever for a completely vicarious transference of joy or sorrow, wealth or poverty.

It would be absurd to endeavour to work out the operation of the Karmic law in every minute incident of life unless one were possessed of an amount of spiritual insight surely not developed by any members of our race who are yet short of the attainment of mastership ; but though we do not now expect to see our way to clearly account for every happening, to the extent of being able to trace the manifest effect unmistakably to the unmanifest cause, we can certainly apply a great body of generally useful teaching very helpfully whenever we confront embarrassing obstacles. We have no need to trouble pious minds who are satisfied with tacit acceptance of the doctrine that whatever comes is due to the working of Divine Providence, and therefore certain to result in good ; it is to

the intellectually distraught who cannot passively accept an unquestioning confidence in Supreme Beneficence that all philosophical reasonings specially appeal. We all meet people wellnigh desperate in face of crying disasters and mountain-like perplexities, to whom it is useless to endeavour to apply the particular kind of consolation that Christian Scientists offer in all sincerity. To tell a person smarting under an exceptionally severe and stunning blow that the experience was metaphysically speaking unreal, and that if he will transfer his thought from sense observation to spiritual realization he will feel the blow no more, may be vividly true from the standpoint of the teacher who proclaims it, but is not truth presented in such form that it can be assimilated by the smarting sufferer. Now if you begin to interest such an afflicted person in the very rudiments of Theosophy and use the best illustrations drawn from actual life that may occur to you, you may find a way of reaching the troubled consciousness of that afflicted neighbour.

You deny nothing ; but you affirm much. You admit the reality of the catastrophe on the plane of gross matter where it has actually occurred and you furthermore make your best endeavour to prove

that it is a discipline, a corrective chastisement or reformatory penalty if you will, but you never call it a *punishment*. That misleading word punishment, together with the equally misleading word reward, is calculated to befog thought and suggest ideas totally incompatible with a recognition of the universal Good Law which operates incessantly and impartially throughout the Universe.

We may say that we punish ourselves when we commit acts of folly and that we reward ourselves when we behave wisely, if by such language we mean that every thought, word and deed is like a seed containing within itself the germ of a future outgrowth, therefore because we sow (or have already sown) a certain kind of seed, we must reap (or are at present reaping) the inevitable fruit.

We need to bear in mind at all times that action can be intense on an inner plane while we are inactive externally, therefore a very great deal of our sowing is continually being done in a manner which meets with no outward observation.

The great gospel counsels bidding disciples to enter into private chambers and pray secretly that they may be rewarded openly, may all be explained in strict accord with the doctrine we are now endeavouring to elucidate, for whenever we fix our

thought where we have already placed our love and thereby bring the two great elements of desire and knowledge into union in our interior economy, we attract only that which this steady magnet within us can attract. We are then rightly concentrated and practically one-pointed.

To be constantly dwelling upon what our experiences may possibly have been in former lives is indeed likely to divert energy from the accomplishment of the work that needs to be done to-day ; still there are doubtless many exceptionally trying seasons in most human lives, the burden of which can be greatly alleviated by glimpses of a former state, and when a reminiscence will prove helpful it often comes, but frequently prejudiced opinions refuse to let in the helpful knowledge at anything like its full value.

The greatest use to which the allied doctrines of Karma and Reincarnation can possibly be put is in the direction of assisting us to understand why and how it is that so many people act as curiously, and as it seems to us, wrongfully as they do, and coupled with this use is the further use of taking all that needless sting out of adversity which makes trouble so terrifically hard to bear. People are heard to say frequently, and quite rationally, that it is not

so much the actual present hardship through which they are passing, difficult though that may be to bear, that makes them desperate, it is the sense of uselessness and injustice of it all that weighs them down to the very dust. To go through a desert knowing it to be a pathway leading to a fertile land is tolerable, even though the suffering encountered on an arid plain may be severe ; but to feel that one is lost in a desert, or that there is no road that leads anywhere desirable to reach, is without question to be plunged in a morass of dark despair. Out of all approaches to despair a doctrine of uncompromising universal equity must of necessity lift those who can accept it, and when despair is extirpated all situations become measurably luminous.

But, says the Christian believer very often when this doctrine is presented to him, " It takes away the delightful, consoling doctrine of forgiveness, for we cannot be forgiven if we have to work out penalties ourselves after we have repented of our iniquities and received absolution."

The whole difficulty here attaches to the meaning conveyed by the user to the word forgiveness. To forgive is to give up, to relinquish our hold upon, and another meaning of the word is to give forth. There are distinctly these two profitable meanings

to this mighty word of glorious import that can enter into the religion of to-morrow.

When we in a *negative* sense forgive we simply cease to hold resentment ; we retain no longer anger in our hearts towards those who have offended us, but when we ascend consciously to the higher meaning of forgiveness and catch some glimpses of its divine positive aspects we think of forthgiving, of radiating blessing, not merely of being free from anger.

Now we must always think of holy spiritual influences as raining down benedictions, as giving forth spiritual solar radiance ; but if we need the purification which temporary suffering will bring us, no celestial influx keeps it from us, but strengthens us to rise above the limitations which now encircle us by heroically meeting and mastering whatever crosses our path to be surmounted by us. Those utterly false ideas of punishment for sin, inflicted arbitrarily in anger, which still becloud so many intellects must be swept away entirely from our creeds and concepts before we can understand and apply forgiving love in our own human relations with our fellow beings in agreement with our enlightened concept of divine administration.

No place of torture or degradation even for the

most violent of criminals can have any place among the institutions of the New Age ; not only because the infliction of pain for the sake of inflicting it is utterly irreconcilable with everything worthy the name of civilization, but also on account of its utter uselessness as a reformatory or educative agent. People are still so much in the mental grip of the false notion that they are being " punished " in this life for things they did amiss in a former existence, if they have caught hold only of the outermost shell of the doctrine of Karma, that they fail to see the truth of the matter which might be expressed in language such as the following : " I am sure I must require for my noblest development whatever I am now called upon to undergo."

We no longer rebel against " adverse fate " when we see this brighter and saner view, neither do we become stoical ; we are led to immediate practical activity, for wise reasoning works out in useful action always.

If I made the conditions in the past which now confront me, I have just one highly important query to raise : How can I utilize the material now at my command so as to convert it into blessed fruition in the future ? Each particular life, both as to its psychical and physical aspects, which the ego lives

in a successive chain of lives is in a sense complete in itself inwardly and outwardly, and yet vitally connected with what went before and with what must come after.

Nothing can be further from the truth than to imagine that because some one here and now is wealthy and has an exalted worldly station he must have earned it by a very virtuous life in centuries gone by, and that those who are now poor and lowly in the world's esteem must be far lower in the scale of spiritual advancement.

The only test of advancement possible to apply refers to how far one uses any station nobly now and to what extent he proves himself superior to external influences. Marcus Aurelius, a Roman Emperor, and Epictetus, a Greek Slave, may have been on an equal summit of spiritual attainment despite the immense difference in their material estates.

As the soul advances through successive conflicts and victories to a height where it can say truthfully, "These things (no longer) move me" and "I have learned in whatsoever state I am therewith to be content," it gives evidence of sovereignty over sense and therefore of having reached a point where it will make little difference what outward things may come and go.

All souls start at the foot of a long ladder ; all climb rung by rung till they finally reach the summit, and when that pinnacle is attained they "go no more out." So far as that series of lives is concerned it is completed, and they are now ready to act as parental and guardian souls to a new set of egos who will form a fresh infant humanity presided over by the matured humanity ripened in the preceding cycle. Such in brief is a bare outline sketch of the leading doctrines of Reincarnation and Karma which are exciting such immense interest all over the world to-day. There is so much of reasonableness in the central thought, and such boundless opportunity for expanding it in all directions that we simply leave it for the consideration of our readers without any attempt at precise personal applications, which, if made at all, must of necessity grow out of individual realizations.

CHAPTER XII

THEOSOPHY, CHRISTIAN SCIENCE, AND OTHER MODERN CULTS—THEIR RELATION TO THE RELIGION OF TO-MORROW

To every thoughtful observer of current tendencies in the field of religious speculation, it must appear little short of self-evident that the latter part of the nineteenth century gave birth to certain remarkable developments which could not do other than create amazement in many quarters on account of the manifest prevalence of two distinctly opposite drifts in popular sentiment and practice.

On the one hand, extreme sacerdotalism rapidly gained ground in the Church of England and the Episcopal Church in America, and on the other hand the disposition to discard priestly authority altogether and to make a bold and determined stand for religious individualism was equally conspicuous. Dr. James Martineau, in his extremely scholarly and intensely interesting work, "The Seat of Authority in Religion," sided with intui-

tionalists against sacerdotalists, and, though devoutly religious in the deepest meaning of the term, his position became almost identical with that of Theodore Parker and other simple Theists who had long ago contended that a time might arrive when books and churches would be largely discredited, but an hour could never strike when the soul would cease to be its own living witness to Deity and immortality.

Whatever sacerdotalists may advance to the contrary, there is a growing conviction, within as well as without the pale of ecclesiastical organizations, that such a position is the only finally certain one, for in the present state of controversy over disputed origins and sanctions there is no secure foundation for the fearless truth-seeker except in the living witness of the living spirit.

The leading tendencies of this age, like those of previous ages, are in the directly opposite directions of looking without and looking within for authoritative guidance. The case is put simply and strongly whenever controversialists agree that there are in reality only two thoroughly definable and defensible positions, and we must either choose between them or confess agnosticism.

Mystics, poets, and all highly introspective indi-

viduals are temperamentally intuitive and therefore individualistic so far as their religious or spiritual experiences are concerned. The individualist in religion is not, however, of necessity a spiritual hermit or recluse, inhabiting mentally, if not physically, an isolated cloister ; he may be the most social of individuals and prove a genial and sympathetic comrade, but he cannot be a dogmatist or one who bows to the sway of exterior dictation.

"Live and let live" is a fair and honourable motto, and one that it would be well for everyone to determine to live up to ; but though it is very easy to preach it, the difficulties in the way of its practice are often far greater than would at a first glance appear probable. We have, many of us, been so trained to revere dogma and to bow before externalized authority that we either cannot or dare not stand forth boldly for spiritual democracy.

Aristocracy in religion, as in social life, has a very firm hold upon the minds and hearts of multitudes, and the very people who would profit most by shaking off traditional yokes are those who often cling to the continuous wearing of them with almost incredible tenacity.

Our strong religious individualists or intuitionists are but few in number as yet, and this is largely

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an age of half-way measures ; compromises appear inevitable while we are passing through a definitely transitional epoch and do not see clearly in which direction the tide is drifting. In consequence of this uncertain attitude on the part of many, the rise and progress of many strange cults in which ancient and modern tendencies and methods are curiously interblended is inevitable, and from the pragmatical standpoint every cult may be welcomed as useful within certain boundaries, but the mistake is so often made of mistaking a fraction for the integer that cults which have much to recommend them from certain viewpoints become causes of distressing acrimony when any one of them is exalted by its enthusiastic but short-sighted devotees to the rank of the one supremely true and presumably infallible religion.

The Theosophical Society started remarkably well, in 1875, when at the very outset of its career it adopted the time-honoured motto "There is no Religion higher than Truth," and the three clearly defined Objects of the Society are broad, definite, and liberal beyond reasonable criticism. The claim has been made on numerous occasions that this interesting and influential body is under the direction of "Masters" who guide its progress

as spiritual superintendents, but though they are fully competent overseers, they leave a great deal in the hands of their far less wise emissaries, with the result that confusion and disruption may arise in the ranks of the Society, owing to the members or "fellows" carrying out their own caprices rather than closely adhering to the great and glorious fundamental principles for which the organization stands. Though certain very prominent personages have stood forth as representing Theosophists, it cannot be said truthfully that the Theosophical Society owed its origin to any single person, though Helena Petrovna Blavatsky and Colonel Henry Steel Olcott were the two most prominent leaders in New York at the time of its inception, November, 1875. From that date forward there have been many sensational ups and downs in theosophical propaganda. Vast amounts of literature have been printed and circulated, and numberless lectures have been delivered in all parts of the world, seeking to familiarize the public with the aims and purposes of the Movement. A great deal of useful work has been done, and it is impossible to determine how widely extended has been the influence of this missionary propaganda, which is mission work of a definitely unique variety; for

instead of seeking to convince Orientals that their historic religions are essentially false and Christianity alone true, theosophical propagandists aim at convincing their hearers that there can be a brotherhood of religions, and therefore no one need abandon his own ancestral faith to become a convert to Theosophy, which aims to be a means of unification on the basis of finding a common denominator.

Though it must be confessed that many individuals who call themselves Theosophists drift lamentably far from the ideals of the Society as set forth in its published objects, it cannot be reasonably denied that in consequence of the nature of its constitution, the Society may logically and consistently achieve a magnificent destiny without in any manner changing its avowed position. In this respect the Theosophical Society is greatly to be congratulated because it has not to contend against printed declarations out of harmony with the advancing spirit of the age.

But while the difficulties confronting many religious bodies grow out of narrow creedal definitions which hamper freedom of speech and action, the world-wide breath of the Theosophical Society's manifesto causes perplexity in many quarters. There are five great and ominous words—Race, Sex,

Caste, Colour, Creed—mentioned in the covenant of fellowship in such a manner that all who join the Society pledge themselves to ignore the fivefold barrier which separates one section of humanity from another and to work to form the nucleus of a truly universal confraternity.

Only very few persons are so highly evolved in consciousness of universal brotherhood and sisterhood that they can overlook distinctions of sex, race, colour, caste, and creed ; but unless they can do so, they are out of place in the Theosophical Society as active workers therein, though it may be liberally conceded that ideals and aspirations must at all times be taken into serious account ; consequently it may be permissible to welcome "fellows" who desire to reach a standard they have not yet attained.

The real difficulty in any society never arises from sincere and earnest seekers after higher attainments than any they have yet reached, but from such as wish to prevent an organization from attaining its grandest objects and drag it down to commonplace conventional levels. We do not presume to say to what extent the Theosophical Society is now working as a vehicle through which "Masters" are accomplishing their beneficent purposes for world-wide

unification, but we do not hesitate to aver that it will be the fault of avowed Theosophists themselves if the prime object is not carried into effect.

Nothing is ever quite so easy as to echo the prevailing race-cries and creed-cries which are loudly sounded in our ears, and nothing requires quite so much stalwart individuality as to resist the psychological influence of a clamorous crowd. Sensational revivals in religion are not due to the exercise of reason or to the following of intuition, but to the effect of sensational oratory coupled with the infection of overwrought feeling.

It may sometimes happen that real conversions from a lower to a higher standard of living take place at popular gatherings where tearful appeals are made by emotional "evangelists," but as a rule over-excited emotion does not tend to permanent spirituality or to ethical advancement, therefore theosophical methods are often characterized by seemingly cold intellectuality rather than by fervid appeals to heated emotion. Extreme intellectualism can never be adequate to meet all cases, but reason must enter into sane and sober religion though emotion is to be by no means excluded therefrom.

It is very easy at a convention to shout for arbitration and echo the words of great seers and sages who have continuously upheld the doctrine of Equal Rights as applied to all humanity ; but to take those sublime ethics into home and school and business office, and actually apply them in daily living, demands a degree of devotion to superlative ideals that only a very few are yet ready to demonstrate.

Turning now to Christian Science, the growth of which has been phenomenal in the course of the last quarter of a century, we confront a Movement which unblushingly claims to have been started by a single American woman, Mary Baker G. Eddy, who is always referred to by Christian Scientists as Founder of the Church of Christ (Scientist).

When Mark Twain, the famous humorist, who could be serious when occasion demanded, wrote his widely circulated work on Christian Science, he took into account some of the psychology of the situation very fairly. Mrs. Eddy, according to his finding, was a shrewd woman who took advantage of the religious pulse-beats of New England at a time when the Commonwealth of Massachusetts had largely revolted from old-time Puritanism and

was literally looking for a new religion which would meet the heavy and varied demands of the period. A simply ethical and philanthropic religion like Unitarianism or Universalism completely failed to meet some of the most pressing popular demands among people who were dissatisfied with any cult or creed that fell short of providing healing for Mind, Body, and Estate.

Though it may fairly be contended that such catering to worldly desires is no part of genuine religion, which ought to occupy itself exclusively with heavenly concerns, we doubt very much whether this attitude is not somewhat at variance with the spirit of the Christian gospels as it is out of touch and tune with earlier Hebrew and Greek religious concepts.

The prophets of Israel, the priests of Egypt and Greece, the early apostles of Christianity, all laid stress on healing and all alike employed their knowledge of Divine Law to the improvement of terrestrial conditions.

A mammon-worshipping sensual society cannot be truly religious, and it certainly can lay no just claim to spirituality ; but then it is never remarkable for bodily health ; on the contrary, it is subject to every variety of physical and mental disorder, and

its financial situation soon becomes distressing in the extreme on account of the pauperism of many which sharply contrasts with the inordinate wealth of a few.

Christian Science has addressed itself to the health problem primarily and in a somewhat less definite manner to the wealth problem, and the result has been that improved health and circumstances frequently follow in the trail of its propaganda.

Every conspicuous and successful movement which strikes the orthodox religionist as heretical stirs up controversy and also provokes limited emulation, and whenever extreme views are held which many partial adherents cannot endorse fully they give rise to other movements more or less diverse but presenting claims and evidences largely similar. Christian Science has found itself imitated to a greater or lesser degree in many places, and though its strict members declare that all seemingly similar movements are totally unlike the poorly copied original, impartial observers and investigators are not able to assign to any regnant cult a monopoly of praise or virtue.

The truth of the matter is that there are vast mines of possibility in our human nature which

are as yet but very imperfectly explored, and for any single body of miners and excavators to claim exclusive ability to tap these boundless resources is to set up a claim which succeeding revelations must inevitably overthrow. It is not the rampant denouncer who takes pride in shouting that Christian Science (so called) is neither Christian nor scientific, and therefore the whole title is a misnomer and the entire movement an imposition, who will ever effectually dispose of the fanatical element in the body he assails, for his assertions are so sweeping and so contrary to the findings of many sincere and intelligent persons who have derived great benefit from the denounced system that he holds himself up as a target for successful retort, and only exposes his own narrow-mindedness and lack of adequate information. The real answer to monopolistic claims can only be given by those who freely and gladly admit that there is much of excellence in an organization which simply errs through not realizing the amount of good work done outside its precincts by equally conscientious and successful manipulators of universal forces. Christian Science appeals strongly and effectively to a certain type of mind that revels in paradoxes and rejoices in alleged possession of labelled truth put before the

world copyrighted as someone's proprietary article. Pills, powders, lotions, plasters, and all sorts of medicaments which Christian Scientists disown, may be made proprietary in marts of trade, so may someone's peculiar views of truth set forth in sectarian volumes and issued by an appointed Publishing House ; but it is impossible to deal thus with universal truth and its healing efficacy.

Judging trees fairly by the fruits they produce, we must admit that the tree of Christian Science has produced a variety of fruit, some of it excellent and some dubious, precisely as in the case of other trees bearing differing appellations. The truth for which Christian Science stands will unquestionably be incorporated in the coming concept of universal religion, but the Church of Christ (Scientist) cannot become *par excellence* the church of the New Age. Every creed and doctrine needs sifting, and a sifting process is now going on rapidly. Permanent elements are being dissociated from those essentially transitory, and though this process involves the disruption of many cherished monopolies, it can only result finally in preserving whatever is of permanent value and rejecting ultimately all that is chaff. The leading doctrines of Christian Science are not altogether easy for the average

novice to comprehend on account of the unusual terminology employed. It cannot be said that Mrs. Eddy's language was either original or unfamiliar to metaphysicians who had become familiar with the terminology of Bishop Berkeley and other metaphysicians of an earlier century, but to the average reader such a sentence as "All is Mind; there is no Matter," sounds bewildering even when a kindred phrase "All is Good; there is no Evil," is admitted as setting forth a monistic as opposed to a dualistic view of the Universe.

To many students of modern metaphysics, who are seeking to apply Christian Science teachings to the conquest of disease, it seems difficult if not impossible to understand the sense in which reality and unreality are contrasted to the extent of declaring that all pain and suffering must be regarded as unreal. The difficulty is by no means so great in practice as in theory, and it seems more a matter of temperament than of essential doctrine whether people are prepared to admit such a phraseology or not. Nothing can be truly real which is evanescent and vanquishable. If disease were a reality in the metaphysical sense it would be everlasting and invincible, consequently all attempts to destroy it would necessarily prove abortive. We may,

perhaps, make a metaphysical doctrine plainer and more acceptable to the average student or patient by simply declaring that "truth destroys error," which is a frequent phrase among Christian Scientists, than by insisting upon the unreality of error. It is by no means necessary to decide to what extent Mrs. Eddy was or was not the modern originator of the particular school of metaphysical thought and practice to which she gave a definite and attractive name in order to judge of the value of the teaching or to test the efficacy of the therapeutic methods recommended. Much controversy has waged around the question of the source or sources whence Mrs. Eddy received the information she ultimately formulated, but such disputes affect personal integrity rather than a body of doctrine and a mode of practice which need to be judged impartially on their own merits.

So many thousands of people in different parts of the world owe their recovery from sicknesses of many kinds, and from all sorts of mental distress, to Christian Science as they have contacted it, that it would be absurd as well as useless to endeavour to convince them that they had been deluded by a phantom or were following an *ignis fatuus* when they know of the blessings they have received

through a certain peculiar form of ministry. To "speak well of the bridge that has carried us safely over" is an act of honest and reasonable justice, no more, no less; but the foolish bigotry and unwarranted fanaticism which claims that our neighbours are not equally indebted to bridges of which we know nothing can never hold place in the minds of liberal and impartial investigators.

The most serious blunder made by Christian Scientists, as a rule, is the old familiar error of monopolizing credit and claiming sole possession of important truth. Herein lies both the strength and the weakness of nearly every influential cult which owes a certain amount of vitality and organic strength to the fact of its being a monopoly, and at the same time alienates a large number of open-minded truth-seekers by the arrogance of its exclusive attitude and the hampering effect that exclusiveness always exerts upon enquiring minds. The average man and woman must have a personal leadership to follow or all teaching seems to them lacking in authoritativeness; but very often the personality is completely unknown to many of the devotees, who nevertheless accept the utterances of the venerated oracle without the least rebellion. This curious fact awakens much questioning in the

minds of serious students of psychology, for it cannot be as easy to comprehend the influence exerted over the masses by an unknown as by a known leader whose outer personality possesses force and charm wherever it is exhibited.

Christian Scientists in Great Britain, Australia, New Zealand, and other lands remote from Massachusetts and New Hampshire, the two American States in which Mrs. Eddy resided, expressed the same high regard for this extraordinarily influential woman as did her followers in the immediate vicinity of her abiding places. This phenomenon is partly explained by reference to the singularly efficient organization which she succeeded in setting in motion and then keeping in perfect running order. Lecturers and literature did an immense work in creating a receptive atmosphere, and the peculiar form of service in Christian Science churches all over the world every Sunday, together with the testimony meetings in the middle of each week, have produced results readily accounted for by deep students of Occultism. It is impossible to have a stated form of service everywhere and a current literature industriously circulated, paying the highest possible tribute to the efficacy of a certain kind of ministration, without inducing

results comparable with those attained by Christian Scientists. The psychology of the situation is not very difficult to grasp. There can always be found a large number of persons in any fair-sized community who, like the Athenians of old, are continually looking for some new thing. Among these are many, no doubt, who are simply hunting for fresh sensations, but there are many more who experience genuine unsatisfied cravings for what will prove to them a practical religion for everyday use, one, moreover, that does not only assure them of happiness hereafter if they are faithful to its requirements, but promises them bettered conditions here on earth in the shape of added prosperity in business together with freedom from bodily distempers.

While it is easily possible to attach inordinate importance to the external or worldly side of healing ministries, it should be fairly admitted that though Mrs. Eddy's claims in her famous textbook "Science and Health, with Key to the Scriptures," may be pronounced extreme, and certain of her metaphysical dogmas may appear to some critics as mere assertions, the main body of Christian Science doctrine, and the practice which logically accompanies it and grows out of it, agrees much more

nearly with primitive Christian doctrine and practice, and also with much that is historically pre-Christian and extra-Christian also, than does the generally accepted orthodoxy which leaves out of practical account the work of healing altogether. This fatal omission is now being recognized by leading prelates of the Anglican Church, and if Christian Science had done nothing more than arouse many Church people to a needed sense of their omissions and inefficiencies it would not have appeared and spread in vain.

Judging by present tendencies, it appears that the exclusiveness of the Christian Science cult, and its thoroughly commercial methods of propaganda, may give place to far more elastic methods; but while it is easy to condemn exclusiveness, it is far more difficult to provide an efficient substitute. Whenever a body of determined people form themselves into a close corporation they are certain to achieve important results, whereas when they are but loosely organized and uncertain as to their accepted tenets they fail to accomplish much conspicuous representative work.

Healing is the corner-stone of the Christian Science organization, and to obtain results in that important domain of benevolent activity it is often

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indispensable to secure conditions in which a definitely formulated doctrine and practice can work without interruption, and that is rarely possible unless a strict rule is formulated and adhered to.

We may contend that obedience to personal or to ecclesiastical rulings is far from conducive to individual development, and this undoubtedly is so, but we need to take into account the actual condition of the majority of sufferers from chronic ailments who fly to modern metaphysical practitioners as a last resort and frequently derive benefit from their ministrations.

Neither pretentious dogmatism nor ruthless iconoclasm can hold any abiding place in the Age which is now approaching. The several pretentious and distinctly useful, indeed necessary, movements or cults which arose in the latter part of the nineteenth century were precursors of a much fuller and freer revelation of essential verities than could be comprehended by multitudes who were but just beginning to emerge from mental servitude of a far more oppressive type than that of the new bondage which was being made ready for them.

The Theosophical Society has done an immense

amount of educational work and is capable of accomplishing a great deal more. The personal acrimonies and dissensions which have disturbed its career have only been like similar disputes which have agitated all other bodies ; the cause for so much having been made of them is that many people had hoped, and indeed confidently expected, that a new organization, professedly under high spiritual directorship, would succeed in avoiding many if not all the pitfalls which beset the path of less illumined bodies ; but there is a bright as well as a dark side to every controversy, and the brightest feature of all is that the very imperfections we instinctively bemoan can be turned to good account as helps along the road to eventually greater self-reliance and genuine spiritual self-confidence.

It cannot be the destiny of any human soul to remain perpetually in leading-strings, following with lamb-like submissiveness every direction of a shepherding overseer ; therefore when the shepherds are found fallible and peccable, like all the rest of partially unfolded humanity, good grows out of seeming evil and fresh impetus is given for individual development. Those who are strong enough to remain within an organization and strengthen and purify it by their earnest and tireless efforts are,

it appears to us, evincing more self-control than those who are driven out by imperfections and inharmony ; but those who feel forced out will gravitate somewhere else, where they will probably start groups of students who may form fresh nuclei, all eventually unifiable when the public mind has grown to understand the law of federated activity to a greater degree than seems manifest at present.

Spiritual and mental phases of healing are being demonstrated in and out of all churches and societies, and even if we witness with joy the gradual deliverance of honest minds from creedal bondage and undue personal direction, we can remain thankful to all leaders and discoverers who have proved effectively instrumental in opening avenues into broader fields of thought and action than any they individually were prepared to roam or graze in. That the religion of the coming period will embrace the work of healing for mind, body, and estate we are thoroughly convinced, and that the present tentative and restrictive schools and methods are forerunners of something greater and freer than themselves we are equally sure. Meanwhile we should endeavour to impartially appraise the value of existing cults and methods, working in them and with them if we feel that such action on our part is

desirable, but if it does not seem to be our immediate portion to identify ourselves with any definitely formulated movements, we surely should be ready gladly to esteem at its true worth the good work they are accomplishing and aim at embodying in our lives the true theosophical principle of granting the same liberty to our neighbours that we desire to seek for ourselves, remembering always that from a higher viewpoint than that of earth accidental differences are negligible while fundamental agreements are matters of permanent concern.

CHAPTER XIII

PROPHETIC RELIGION AND CIVIC RIGHTEOUSNESS

CONCERNING the true relation of Religion to Industrial and Social Problems many widely divergent views have long been expressed, two diametrically opposite opinions or sets of views being entertained by equally sincere and honest religionists regarding the proper functions of a religious ministry, and as we well know this wide divergence of sentiment does not merely serve to mark differences between professors of varying creeds, it exists in large degree in almost all communions.

One party argues that religious questions are purely spiritual, and being exclusively such, priests and preachers are misusing their pulpits when they introduce secular themes for discussion during sacred services.

On the other hand there are many, and their number is continually increasing, who contend that

no theme which has any direct bearing upon human welfare can be rightly alien to a religious ministry.

To all who turn to the Bible for sanctions, the latter contention seems much more easy to sustain than the former, for the prophets of ancient Israel were outspoken reformers who never refrained from mixing religion with politics, to use a very modern phrase. But the prophets themselves were true statesmen, never party politicians, consequently they never fell into the errors of those modern ministers who employ their pulpits for party propaganda. All true prophets were and are exhorters unto righteousness, therefore they cannot exclude discussions of moral questions from their ministry because some ethical topics may be unpopular and not directly theological, in the academic or ecclesiastical acceptance of the word.

If pure and undefiled religion, as the Epistle of James declares, contains two essential parts—philanthropy and purity—then all genuine religion must have some direct bearing upon public affairs as well as on private life.

In days of old, when prophets were widely esteemed as special messengers of Heaven, those stalwart opponents of every species of injustice

invariably took it upon themselves to rebuke iniquity wherever they found it, and because they rightfully regarded occupants of thrones, and all persons placed exceptionally high, as more than ordinarily responsible for the state of affairs in general, we may well regard the attitude of the most conspicuous among them as characteristic of a steady policy from which no thoroughly conscientious prophet ever deviated.

When the Bible tells us that Elijah rebuked Ahab and Jezebel and thereby drew down upon him the relentless hostility of the reigning monarchs and all their satellites, it does not merely relate a local incident and furnish a sketch of what happened to a single intrepid man, it suggests very clearly what was the general posture of the great prophets of ancient Israel in the face of widespread demoralization.

In these days we do not find that peoples as a whole are anything like so ready to follow kings and queens blindly as they were in days gone by, unless some exceptionally strong individual occupies a throne for the time being, nor do we find the multitude standing in anything like so great awe of the Church as in former periods. Still, despite all modern republican and democratic tendencies

and the boast of popular freethinking, we find that Church and State are still two mighty forces to reckon with.

By those two highly expressive and widely inclusive terms we purpose to include all institutionalized authority. Exactly what boundaries may be attached by sacerdotalists to the word Church we shall not attempt to estimate, knowing full well that extreme Roman Catholics employ the word only as applying to the Church of Rome, or at the very utmost they may include the Greek Orthodox Church, said to be schismatical but not heretical, while the High Anglicans speak glibly of three branches of the Church—Roman, Greek, Anglican—and exclude all “dissenters,” while the so-called Free Church idea includes a multitude of different denominations agreeing upon certain not very clearly defined “essentials.” With these controverted points we are not now concerned, so we will use the word Church to include the cathedral, the synagogue, the undenominational meeting-house, and all other places where people congregate avowedly for spiritual and ethical instruction as well as for the performance of definite acts of worship.

It is well known that Congregationalists (formerly

called Independents) have frequently used their pulpits for political speeches and have fully justified this much-attacked usage by reference to the greatest among the Hebrew prophets. Whether the justification is complete is a very open question, for there is an immense difference between preaching ethics impartially and urging a congregation to vote a certain party ticket at a coming election. But even here we may be fairly confronted with the statement that the pastor of a certain religious flock may know that one candidate stands for civic righteousness and another for political injustice and general pandering to corrupt practices, and when such knowledge is in the possession of a minister, he may reasonably claim that he feels it to be his solemn duty as a faithful pastor to guide his flock into pastures of purity and safety, when otherwise they might ignorantly and innocently wander into dangerous fields and sink into a veiled morass of iniquity. No hard-and-fast line can be drawn in particular instances, for we instinctively and rightfully admire any and every man who speaks honestly from conviction, regardless of whether the people whom he addresses will be pleased or displeased by his outspoken utterances. It goes without saying that personal feelings and

party prejudices have no rightful place in any pulpit or on any ethical platform, and because it is often next to impossible to steer entirely clear of these menaces to fair judgment it is usually desirable to avoid personal references and deal with questions from so lofty and universal a standpoint as to exclude from religious exhortations everything that looks in the least like electioneering or lobbying.

In all matters of this kind very much must of necessity be left to individual conviction and to the exact condition of affairs at certain times and in particular localities; all that can fairly be put forward as a general rule to follow relates to a fearless mental attitude behind all utterances. Many preachers to-day are not deserving of the old opprobrious title "dumb-dogs," for they do open their lips and produce vocal sounds, but they are fairly characterized as "muzzled," and as the muzzle is bought, applied and kept in position on the clerical mouth in many instances by the wealthiest members of a flock on whose financial generosity the muzzled pastor's salary largely depends, an impression has gone abroad, particularly among large sections of the population designated "the working classes," that the average

preacher is not altogether sincere, as a consequence serious-minded working men and women are not greatly interested in anything he may have to say. Unfortunately this disagreeable impression has some solid foundation under it, and consequently cannot be entirely dispelled by even the best efforts of the most thoroughly conscientious and unfettered ministers of religion until the number of the fearless has been greatly increased and the fettered equally diminished.

Here we have reached the actual crux of the entire difficulty with the modern ministry of religion, and until this question is fearlessly faced and heroically handled, all tentative reforms and temporary palliative measures will prove disappointing. If this ungracious state of affairs existed only in an Established Church, disestablishment might be a settlement ; or if it were confined to old and conservative organizations, a remedy might be found by deserting the old ecclesiastical ships and travelling in new vessels built within our own day and generation. But by going over from one denomination to another, or by leaving our old church-homes and attending the newest types of bethels we do not escape the evil we seek to abolish, for it crops out everywhere, and often it is

more conspicuous in a small new sect than in an ancient well-established denomination, the very size of which allows an amount of unrebuted outspokenness which would not be tolerated without an outcry in a small modern oratory.

From the standpoint of righteousness,—which we here define as loyalty to one's uttermost conviction regardless of social and financial consequences,—no theological question enters into the argument, because it is universally admitted among intelligent thinkers that there may be the widest conceivable theological differences of opinion among equally brave and conscientious men and women, in and out of religious organizations or ethical societies.

The well-known case of the famous Father Dolling serves to illustrate graphically how largely amenable to unmistakable sincerity is the mass of so-called "lower-class" individuals. Father Dolling was an Anglican priest of extremely ritualistic tendencies; his theology was that of the highest of high church Anglicans, and he employed ceremonies in the conduct of religious services bordering so closely on Roman Catholic practices that he often got into difficulty with the bishops of the English Church and incurred the undisguised

displeasure of many "low church" people in London and in Portsmouth, who made all the trouble they could for him on account of his insistence upon a ritual of which they greatly disapproved. But just because this truly noble and completely conscientious clergyman proved himself upright in all his dealings, and self-sacrificing to the point of utmost possibility, the sailors in Portsmouth and the outcasts in the East End of London acclaimed him a prophet, and they heeded his words when he rebuked their ungodliness in tones as stentorian as any attributed to the prophets of ancient Israel.

When Father Dolling passed from the earthly to the unseen state, all denominations united in doing honour to his memory, for they knew and gladly testified that he was a "man of God" in the true sense of that honourable ancient designation. Such is one striking evidence of the receptivity of the modern world to the voice of truly fearless prophets. A time-serving policy which runs in measure with the hunted hare and partly with the chasing hounds is popular in circles where insincerity and timidity are reckoned among virtues, but nowhere else, and whatever may be the faults of the aggressive element in labour circles, all observation proves that the average wage-earner of the semi-belligerent

type respects straightforwardness wherever he finds it and heartily despises hypocrisy. Such vulgar phrases as "the canting parson," and several others far more offensive, did not originate with any hostility to religion but in consequence of setting high value upon all who professed to teach religion. The "parson" in days gone by was looked up to as the holiest and best-informed person in every village community, but when he betrayed mean and sordid tendencies and showed himself to be no better than the carnally-minded squire and his fox-hunting associates a reaction set in, and the once-venerated minister became a target at which the village wits were wont to hurl abusive epithets. While the nonconformist ministry never became so openly materialistic as a section of the clergy in the Established Church, the greater dependency of the minister upon the contributions of chapel-goers led to much trimming of sails to curry favour with the most influential sustainers of the meeting-house, and so it came to pass that an increasing feeling arose that we can get on very well without paying much heed to the words addressed to us from pulpits, for the minister is actually the hired servant of the congregation.

In Jewish circles the same low estimate of the

rabbi has grown out of similar conditions, and it is a perplexing problem in these freethinking days to find any middle ground between a despotic ministry, which coerces a people into enforced submission to its *ex cathedra dicta*, and a simply hireling ministry which exercises no real influence in a community because it lacks moral backbone and caters slavishly to the dictation of its financial rulers.

There is but one real solution, and that can be found only where there are genuine prophets. A true prophet always makes himself heard and felt, and one cannot silence him by threats or bribery. A prophet may be a preacher in a cathedral or one who harangues the passers-by at street corners or in a public park. The true prophet may be extremely refined in appearance and manner or he may be repulsively uncouth, or anything between refined and vulgar, but his message is discussed and heeded, and the more he is opposed the stronger does his influence become. Such a man or woman is a preacher of individual and of civic righteousness far more than of any special brand of theology, and it is the appeal to uncompromising equity that strikes home and bears fruit. A true prophet can never be a luxury-loving pamperer of carnal appetites, for such a person, no matter how

sublimely gifted with forceful eloquence, will certainly succumb to the seductions of Mammon, and no one can serve God and Mammon, but we can learn to serve God and rule Mammon, and that is the greatest and most important of all the lessons to be learned by all who are in training for the coming ministry. Church and State should never be regarded as rival institutions, both being vitally concerned with civic righteousness unless they have become grossly corrupted.

Thomas Huxley, whose views on theological points were avowedly agnostic, saw a possible established Church whence righteousness should flow over the nation. Matthew Arnold attached far more importance to the function of prophet than to any other ministerial function, and England in the latter portion of the nineteenth century was blessed with many other uncompromising sticklers for outspoken integrity whose theology could never have stood the tests applied by Rome or Canterbury.

Religious formalism soon becomes an easy habit ; we take our church services and private devotional exercises as we take our physical meals, in stated quantities and at regular intervals. Without unduly deprecating this regular perfunctory spiritual feeding which doubtless agrees with some constitutions

though not with others, we find it does very little to reform existing abuses or to establish righteousness in high places. William Stead was undeniably right when he laid immense emphasis upon Civic Centres and refused to justify any kind of religion which was entirely absorbed in "other-worldliness."

When Moncure Conway wrote his epoch-making book, "An Earthward Pilgrimage," he struck a certain prophetic note by insisting that there had been too much said about some other world, and far too little about this present world and its practical affairs, by contemporary preachers. Such a statement always challenges discussion, for there are many earnest souls who feel that it is the spiritual world beyond physical dissolution that the ministry of religion should prepare us for ; and if the tendency in any community is definitely Spiritualistic, then the chief object of the religious assembly is to put us in conscious touch with a spirit-world beyond the confines of mortality.

Though there is a large grain of truth in all this contending for knowledge of spiritual existences, there are two great questions to be raised and answered if possible, in this immediate connection, and they are the following : (1) What sort of life here and now is the best preparation for future blessed-

ness ? (2) By what means can we commune helpfully with intelligent entities who are not discernible by outward sense ?

If it can be satisfactorily shown that a kind of religion which enters actively and efficiently into the glorious work of making this world more heavenly than it has yet become is both the best preparation for a happy hereafter and the most effective means for obtaining fellowship with those celestial helpers with whom we desire to commune, the case is clearly decided in favour of the prophetic type of religion in contradistinction from those many popular varieties which present far less heroic features.

To all who believe in any sort of communion and fellowship with spiritual intelligences wiser than our ordinary selves, we would urge that by throwing ourselves into statesmanship for the good of humanity at large,—not to win personal emoluments or serve private ends,—we can afford the best conditions for vital union with the heavens ; therefore the Spiritualistic element in the religion of the coming Age will be by no means overlooked, but it will be a philanthropic, not a selfish Spiritualism that will be exalted.

To all who delight in studying the records of

antiquity and learning as much as possible concerning civilizations long passed, but whose monumental remains are fascinating the archæologists of to-day, we may well address a word of exhortation, requesting them to take well to heart the rapidly accumulating testimonies to the fact that in the palmiest days of old religion played a vital part in civil affairs. But we must discriminate unsparingly between priestly despotism and prophetic leadership.

Whenever a cult becomes despotic we shall find that it has grown corrupt. Wherever blind submission is exacted and threatenings are hurled against all who dare to question the authoritative rulings of prelates or civil governors, it matters not which, we may be certain that the seat of authority cannot bear dispassionate investigation. It is never the work of a prophet to hoodwink or bamboozle, to stifle conviction and pervert men and women with reason and conscience of their own into a set of sycophantic satellites revolving round a decaying planet, for a prophet's mission is to arouse thought, to awaken conscience, to appeal fervidly and successfully to the interior convictions of those addressed, to the end that though they follow the prophet's leadership only as members of a fine musical organization will follow the *baton* of a

competent conductor, each member of the band may become himself an intelligent musician, knowing what he is about and consciously contributing his share to the full orchestral harmony.

A truly efficient religious leader will never lack for hearers or for followers. Never was the need for prophets felt more strongly than to-day, and should every fane become deserted wherein conformity to established precedent obtains, and should it appear for the moment that religion had died a lingering death, finally expiring from sheer exhaustion, the prophet would summon the multitude to listen to the new voice raised for deeper faith and greater purity, and this brave exhorter unto righteousness would gather around him a company of workers for the new order who would find in the new statement of religion a return to the prophetic fervour renowned of old, coupled with glad and free acceptance of every fresh revelation demanded by the wider needs of the immediate present.

Should priests vanish and stereotyped religious formalism become extinct, the voice of the living spirit could never be silenced, and were it heard in the open air rather than under any consecrated dome it might prove all the more resonant and

convincing. The proclaimer of righteousness can never be rendered dumb, but the time-serving office-seeker may find not only that his days are numbered but that they are definitely ended when the new day breaks and the shadows which still obscure the sun of righteousness are entirely dissipated.

CHAPTER XIV

THE RELIGION OF TO-MORROW—A GENERAL PROPHETIC FORECAST

THE much misunderstood and often underrated rôle of prophet is one that needs to be very clearly expounded in these eventful days when the questioning intellect is everywhere industriously at work seeking to decipher the hieroglyphics of the Universe and explain every phenomenon observable in accordance with a rule of strict adhesion to the relentless doctrine of Cause and Effect.

In previous essays we have endeavoured, at least in a simple cursory manner, to trace out some of the lines along which the best modern thought is travelling, and we have also made some effort to show that what we have termed the centrifugal and centripetal movements of present thinking must be equally esteemed, because these two oppositely flowing mental currents are comparable with ocean and river tides which ebb and flow perpetually, and equally are these motions in accord with all

Nature's manifold operations so far as scientists and philosophers have yet been able to discover them.

We often use the term "reactionary" without due regard to its lawful import. Frequently indeed are "reactionaries" spoken of with contempt, often most unfairly, for while, to use astrological phraseology, they are Saturnian rather than Mercurian in disposition, we have no right to call a halting order a mistake or a return journey an error, unless we positively know it to be a result of cowardice, time-serving policy, or something else incompatible with high ethical standards and considerations.

It may safely be said that no so-called reactionary step when taken by a serious earnest-minded and noble-hearted man or woman can ever be an actual return to a position once abandoned. Mental processes are in spirals, therefore whenever we seem to get back to a starting-point the belief that we have actually returned to former vantage ground is an illusion, for we cannot possibly have escaped the results accruing from intermediary experiences.

In the religious world we are constantly meeting with instances like the case of the popular evangelist in America, Benjamin Fay Mills, who was at one

time an orthodox revivalist and then became an extremely unorthodox advocate of Emersonian philosophy. Many were the tears shed over this good man's defection from orthodoxy and many also were the jubilations. After several years' activity as a free-lance lecturer and undenominational ethical instructor, we find this same Mr. Mills conducting evangelistic services in a Presbyterian Church in New York City and speaking with all the fervour of an evangelist as of old. What, we might well have asked, had become of those widely advertised and frequently rehearsed convictions embodied in popular lectures, delivered all over America, bearing title "Why I changed my religious opinions"?

We could detect only one valid justification for a return to more nearly "orthodox" positions, viz. the effect of war conditions upon human sentiment, for while the United States of America maintained for the time being nominal neutrality in a political sense, the American people were in many instances as much affected sympathetically by the great war in Europe as were members of the nations actually engaged in conflict. Mr. Mills had not thoroughly returned to old positions; whether he fully realized it or not, he had taken a

third position while many people imagined he had gone back to a first. In reality we cannot, and therefore we do not, ever go back to anything in the full meaning of the phrase. It need not be difficult to re-enter an old fold and participate afresh in an ancient fellowship, but the consciousness of the returner must be affected by experiences gained during foreign intellectual and emotional journeyings. We can physically return to the old home which we left for a while, and we may have even declared we never wished to view it again, and then feel very glad to be back in it, but we cannot obliterate the results of our wanderings in distant climes, for we can never be as ignorant as formerly of the thoughts and feelings, or of the habits and customs, of denizens of other climes.

Far from regretting the re-entrance of an earnest man or woman into an old affiliation, we may find much cause for rejoicing on account of the self-evident fact that there are multitudes of people who require mental housing and who cannot thrive in entirely open pastures; then again we should remember how many there are who need the counsel and guidance of persons of wide and varied experience who are now within certain restrictive folds, and who are heavily burdened with doubts

and difficulties which cannot be successfully dealt with by any who have never wandered nor by any who are at present too far from the folds in which these strugglers are now enclosed to be able to get to them with any message of help and consolation. We have noted, often with sincere delight, how very prevalent is the idea becoming among truly enlightened thinkers that it is extremely wise in a multitude of instances to endeavour to do our very best exactly where we are instead of seeking fresh fields and unknown pastures.

We very often err in imagining that we can do no good work by remaining where we have been placed by the operation of forces whose activities we as yet but very imperfectly comprehend ; then, whenever we feel arising within us a desire to render fuller service, and at the same time gain self-emancipation from mental and spiritual thraldom, we ruthlessly burst our bonds, as we consider them, and fare forth into a great unknown wilderness of uncertainty regarding all things, or else we betake ourselves to an unfamiliar sanctuary and for a while rejoice in a sense of peace and hitherto unrealized satisfaction at having found what we fondly believe will prove henceforward a haven of refuge from all our doubts and fears. Many

converts to Roman Catholicism have joined the Roman Church chiefly, if not solely, on account of its uncompromising dogmatism in matters of faith and morals.

These good people, far from resenting the extremest prelatical or hierarchical assumptions, have welcomed them enthusiastically as a refuge from the painful uncertainty prevalent in non-dogmatic folds. To such minds the words of a great Master, "Come unto me, all ye who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," appeal with overwhelming force, and when a Church claims to be the representative of Christ on earth, commissioned and fully equipped to make good the divinest promises, it is but natural, and indeed inevitable, that persons whose greatest felt need is a sense of mental repose and spiritual security should accept the proffered aid and retire into the bosom of a mothering institution which exacts obedience to authority from its members but does not tax the intellect with the toilsome work of thinking out a religious system of one's own.

Were it possible for a dogmatic church, as at present constituted and indoctrinated, to satisfy all the reasonable demands of head and heart alike, and at the same time give to its members the boon

of inward rest, such a church would of necessity become world-embracing and prove the one church of the New Dispensation ; but as matters now stand a dogmatic institution invariably raises more doubts and difficulties than it can settle, and not only does it harrow the feelings of the more sensitive among its members by presenting cruel and irrational doctrines sandwiched between beautiful and comforting assurances, but it actually manifests so much of internal disunion that those who fly into its embrace, believing it to be an ark of refuge from all spiritual perturbations, soon discover that differences of opinion, even on vital essentials or fundamentals, disturb the serenity of every fellowship which professes to be a repository of infallible certainty in matters of faith and morals. We have instanced the Roman Catholic Church in particular because it makes louder and more persistent claims to infallibility than any other communion, and it does undoubtedly present an unusually united front to the outside world ; nevertheless Catholic theologians are by no means all agreed, and though strenuous efforts have been made in Rome to suppress Modernism it is well known that those efforts have been by no means entirely successful.

The Church of England, and its marching partner the American Episcopal Church, present the spectacle of organizations in which immensely wide latitude of opinion and practice are permitted to exist, and though fighting sacerdotalists vigorously oppose liberal tendencies their efforts are constantly being thwarted by the triumphs of influential "Broad Churchmen," among whom are several distinguished prelates, who insist upon overruling the restrictive dogmatism of zealous sticklers for ecclesiastical exclusiveness. It is beyond question unjust to impugn the honesty of motive which frequently prompts ecclesiastical bigots and reactionaries vigorously to oppose all tendencies which are antagonistic to the mediæval spirit ; but while gladly admitting their sincerity of purpose, and further conceding that they may be accomplishing many good works in the discharge of their various ministries, we need not try to evade the issue that they are certainly not moving in the direction in which new vital currents are flowing.

The difficulty confronting the average man or woman who undertakes to tackle religious problems seriously, and at the same time fearlessly, is the fact that there are so many diverging theories expressed by modern writers, often by gifted persons

of equally wide and deep scholarship, on the same general subjects. From a superficial standpoint this diversity of views appears calamitous, but regarded more profoundly it is immeasurably instructive and also definitely encouraging. If the eternal safety and happiness of human souls depended upon rigid conformity to specified doctrines and practices, then nothing could be more appalling than the spectacle of multitudes of honest-hearted men and women rushing down to inevitable perdition on account of their failure to accept some certain variety of stereotyped theology ; but when we let in the light of reason and of intuition we are by no means dismayed at the sight of this extreme diversity of view, because we rest assured that " God fulfils Himself in many ways."

As this is emphatically an age of renaissance we can hardly forecast the future reasonably without to some extent reviewing the past ; let us then turn attention forthwith to the recorded utterances of some of the greatest doctors of the early Christian Church and familiarize ourselves a little with the best thought which has been handed down to us from those old worthies who lived and wrote in a period of reconstruction and general mental upheaval, not altogether unlike the present time of

general readjustment. Those who approach the so-called Fathers of the Church for the first time are often amazed at the breadth of view and at the kindness of sentiment which characterizes much of their theology, for a widespread impression had, till very recently, gained ground that the early teachers in Christendom were protagonists of those extremely harsh and repellent doctrines which have long alienated many earnest and devout persons from all affiliation with religious bodies which proclaim them. Such a nightmare of theology as everlasting torment, which heads the list of unbelievable theological atrocities, receives no sanction whatever from the noblest of the Fathers of the early Church, and it is but the meanest of subterfuges to attempt to defend so flagrant a heresy on the specious plea that some sinners can only be restrained by such an enunciation.

It is not the hardened sinner as a rule who makes the greatest protest against such a doctrine, but the nearly saintly humanitarian, whose reason and conscience revolt together against such abominable methods of ecclesiastical policing. We must exercise both reason and conscience in all matters pertaining to religion, or else allow religion to fade into obscurity as a new and brighter age dawns upon

humanity ; such is the ineradicable conviction of an ever-increasing multitude of rational truth-seekers. Whenever a new dispensation is due to commence, the processes of sifting become intensely acute, and it is at such times in human history that new systems are born and great intellects are raised up to conserve all that is righteously conservable in old systems while they present to the world many new aspects of everlasting and essentially unchanging truth.

A prominent American preacher like Pastor Russell, whose printed discourses are circulated widely in nearly every country of the earth, claims that his Bible Studies embody doctrines identical with those of primitive Christianity, and though we may not be able to endorse the whole of that extensive claim we can certainly trace many of his inculcations to decidedly ancient sources.

The doctrine of the complete annihilation of the finally impenitent, which is a portion of the Russellian creed, has been widely accepted by many persons who believe that some souls may deliberately and finally reject even far greater opportunities which will be granted in a new age for accepting truth than are now generally afforded, but to many others it appears a totally unwarrant-

able assumption that this will ever be the case. It can be due only to a very poor and limited view of human inwardness that any such idea with regard to "final impenitence" can win acceptance, and immediately we take the much better and broader view of our common humanity we discard such a supposition as altogether without adequate foundation.

We cannot even remotely speculate as to what the religion of the future will actually be unless we entertain some clear ideas concerning the men and women who will profess and practise the coming religion, for there can be no religion as a thing apart from humanity.

In a very valuable treatise in small compass entitled **UNIVERSALISM**, by **A BELIEVER** (published by Elliot Stock, 62 Paternoster Row, London, E.C.) we find extracts from several of the Fathers, notably Origen, one of the very greatest and also one of the truly mildest, setting forth the best ideas then brought into controversial prominence. It is universally admitted that it took fully three centuries for the finally accepted orthodox Christian position on many subjects to have become so completely fashioned in the realm of thought as to be expressible in rigid confessions of belief, and though we hear it reiterated incessantly by a certain type

of churchmen that the creeds finally agreed upon were due to the direct inspiration of the Holy Spirit working through the successors of the original apostles, we fail to find any real evidence that the great historical Religious Councils gave proof of being thus divinely guided. Indeed, all historians agree that the scenes of strife which disfigured these much vaunted convocations testified to a belligerent and worldly spirit far more than they manifested the sweet and gentle action of a celestial influx, the tendency of which would unmistakably have been to unite brethren in the bonds of loving concord, unmarred by prelatical ambition and personal desires for temporal, even though nominally ecclesiastical, ascendancy.

More and more is it becoming evident that we shall look in vain for any definite revelation from the higher spiritual regions until we once for all turn away from the contentious wrangling of ambitious men and women who love arrogant rulership and still seek to compel the world to bow to their haughty declarations of assumed infallibility. The real birthday of the true Christian Church may have been the first Whitsunday, that memorable Feast of Pentecost ten days after the Ascension of the Master beyond the sight of exclusively

material vision. The second chapter of the Acts of the Apostles tells us impressively that a multitude was gathered with one accord in one place, and that when the most exquisite harmony prevailed then were the members of the assembly filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with new tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. Even though historical proof may be inconclusive if we seek to fix a definite place and date for this glorious spiritual outpouring, it is very easy to credit the beautiful story as a charming narrative intended to settle for all time the oft-recurring query as to what conditions are necessary for obtaining the largest and most definite degree of heaven-born inspiration.

Time and place are utterly negligible, but spiritual conditions must be complied with or the highest results cannot possibly follow. While all can endorse and admire the magnificent saying "God is no respecter of persons," and we can add "neither of times and places," we should be utterly at variance with all human experience did we ignore the important fact that though persons, times and places need not be regarded as such, certain states of thought and feeling, certain definitely united aspirations and holy intentions, are at all times

and everywhere necessary to the reception of blessings from on high. At the outset of any great spiritual movement definitely intended to reawaken spirituality among the inhabitants of our planet, there is a great outpouring of fervour for righteousness which enters into the very inmost receptacles of human consciousness. Men, women and even children become so deeply imbued with this intense conscientiousness that they court rather than shun what we often call martyrdom ; not necessarily physical torture,—though that is frequently inflicted upon them by relentless persecutors,—but always witness-bearing to whatever they feel to be the truth and nothing but the truth.

But even when contemplating the teaching and illustrious career of a truly saintly martyr we must not part company with reason so as to allow ourselves to be led to accept as infallible truth whatever may have been uttered in a state of ecstasy by some exceptionally holy person ; still it is far more probable that genuinely saintly persons devoted to the highest ideals, and who live the purest lives conceivable, should be led directly by Divinity than that God should reveal truth through the agency of disputatious bishops struggling to impose their personal authority upon humanity.

and often resorting to external force when milder measures prove ineffectual.

Gradually the martyr-spirit gave place to one of worldly ambition in the rapidly spreading Christian Church, but it took a long time to establish a priestly hierarchy of extended dominance, and this was not accomplished finally without the aid of the civil arm; thus it is to the unrighteous Emperor Constantine in the fourth century, more than to any other individual, that the world may have been definitely indebted for the secularizing and mutilating of Christianity.

In the days of Origen there were controversies, as there probably were from the very inception of the Christian movement, which was primarily eclectic in the widest application of the word; but simple controversy is unavoidable in an open forum where equal rights are conceded to fellow-members of a society, and controversy carried on in a righteous truth-seeking spirit is beneficial rather than adverse, seeing that without open discussion and honest comparison of views there could be none of that wholesome friction which enables brethren who prize each other's rights and liberties to enjoy their mental goods in common. Any prophetic forecast which takes no notice of past

history must of necessity be very far from widely inclusive, because human nature is essentially the same in all periods, for it is in the depths of human nature that religious convictions take their rise, and it is in consequence of the depth and permanence of these convictions, considered radically, that religion cannot be extirpated though it may be temporarily overclouded.

Before the time of Origen appeared Clemens Alexandrinus, a man of extremely noble character and fervent piety of the heroic intellectual type. Widely renowned for erudition, he was equally esteemed for his goodness of heart ; from what we can ascertain of this great and good man's theology we can reasonably predict that it might well be included, at least in considerable measure, in an outline textbook of universal religion, not simply of nominal Christianity. Clemens Alexandrinus uniformly asserted the universal benevolence and beneficence of Deity ; the benevolent and beneficent nature of justice ; the salutary object of chastisement or penalty here and hereafter ; the ultimate purification of the denizens of the underworld ; the final deliverance from suffering and exaltation to bliss of the entire human family.

Origen undoubtedly coincided in the main with

those excellent doctrines, and while the word "everlasting" occurs in his writings with reference to sufferings in Hades, the word is used as a translation of *aionion*, meaning age-enduring. Even Satan, according to Origen, is to be ultimately reinstated in his long forfeited glory and become once more Lucifer, the light-dispenser.

That the religion of to-morrow will be Universalism as opposed to Partialism we are thoroughly convinced, on moral as well as on intellectual grounds; but the crude absurdities which many ignorant persons ascribe to Universalism are totally opposed to its spirit and to its most definite declarations.

The Universalist denomination in America by no means includes all, or nearly all, who accept the essentials of Universalism in the broad definition of the term, but that liberal body of Christians has rendered immense service to the cause of a religion which appeals to heart and head together by concisely formulating a Confession of Faith containing the two following sentences:—

The certainty of retribution for sin.

The final harmony of all souls with God.

Were this question one of academic interest only we might regard it as a non-essential, but as it

strikes at the very root of all educational and reformatory endeavours it must be faced frankly and fearlessly at every turn.

The religion of the future will undoubtedly concern itself so very greatly with educational activities that the enormous amount of attention now given to the treatment of disease and crime will be almost entirely transferred to the educational region.

There is one gleam of light we can catch from the hideously false doctrine of hopeless hells, and that is the certain assurance that the inventors of the dogma of endless misery were well convinced that no one could be reformed through the agency of torture. The prison system in many countries at its very worst has derived sanction from belief in vindictive punishment as a part of divine administration, and we all know how worse than ineffective have been the barbarous methods which still, in some modified degree, disgrace many a so-called civilized administration.

We do not wish to predict the triumph of maudlin sentiment which pats criminals on the back or simply pities them, exclaiming, "Poor creatures, they were born depraved and could not help doing as they did." Such vapidity may only issue from

a soft heart unaccompanied by a sound head, and it is certainly a protest against the barbarism we are internationally outgrowing, but such invertebrate sentiment will never rid the world of criminality. There is need for much more heroic teaching and for a straightforward enunciation of the salutary doctrine of sowing and reaping in orderly sequence here and hereafter, now and through all ages; but the true reconstructor of human institutions must base all endeavours upon the foundation of a rational psychology. Our anthropology is as much at fault as our theology, and the two inevitably go together.

The religion of to-morrow will teach no such inconsistency as the inherent sinfulness of human nature and then undertake to punish the sinner for sinning, when he could do naught else but sin in consequence of innate depravity. We need to hark back to the uncompromising ethical teachings of the great prophets of ancient Israel in this regard, prophets who forcefully condemned iniquity in all its myriad forms because of their intense conviction that humanity is essentially divine. To talk of "necessary evils" is to confound language and so juggle with nouns and adjectives that parts of speech are rendered utterly blind and unintelligible.

Whatever is necessary cannot be evil, likewise whatever is evil cannot be necessary if words mean anything, unless we boldly claim that what we call evil is simply unripe good. There are two views of evil alike philosophically tenable and also two varieties of evils easily classifiable into groups for generalization purposes. What Henry James, author of "The Secret of Swedenborg" and "Society the Redeemed Form of Man," called "good natural evil" can only be that imperfection which must perforce accompany growing individual intelligence as set forth in a truly masterly manner by Rabindranath Tagore in "Sadhana, the Realization of Life." The other sort of evil, often styled a voluntary misuse of power, leading eventually to Black Magic, may rightly be termed punishable iniquity which invariably brings disaster upon all who indulge in it. But though some form of awful penalty, which strikes terror to the beholders of it, must inevitably follow upon deliberate transgression of moral precepts, we have every right to claim that the ultimate result of the casting of a rebel archangel out of Heaven into a dark abyss,—if we may consider such warning allegories literally as well as figuratively,—will be the transformation of that outcast Satan into a new and grander

Lucifer. Everything tends to go back to first principles, therefore if the words of the opening chapter of Genesis are true, "In the beginning God," then good is *omega* as well as *alpha*. On the basis of this sublime concept the religion of to-morrow must firmly stand, even as all that was most excellent in the religion of yesterday stood firmly thereon ; and what is the religion of to-day presenting in its condition of amazing and perpetual flux, but a religion in process of recovery from a painful and serious sickness, an invalid entering upon a period of convalescence and destined to take literally a new lease of life and then march forward as never before with strength and courage long predicted but never yet externalized in any universal manner ?

A new age demands a new statement of religion, but not fundamentally a new religion, for no modern prophet improves upon the sublimest utterances of seers and sages who lived long ago. The newness of the new declarations consists of two important elements : (1) The wider dissemination of essential spiritual verities than ever previously. (2) The fuller application of these acknowledged verities to the practical affairs of daily life. The religious devotee of to-morrow will not

be so much an exclusive mystic as an idealistic rationalist in philosophy, for the tendency of the mystic has usually been to withdraw overmuch from the companionship of neighbours and rejoice only in inward ecstasies, while the honourable rationalist, who has lacked a sufficiency of ideality and has gone to the other extreme from the mystic, has been so exclusively engrossed with the externals of existence as to leave little, if any, room for the cultivation of those inner faculties which to the mystic are the only things of real importance.

Whether the coming man and woman will be individually as completely rounded off as many contemporary forecasters devoutly hope and fervently expect or not, we may rest assured that the immediate future will reveal a far nearer approach to symmetry than the past has witnessed. The feminist movement of to-day is doing very much to break down the old barriers between males and females and to restore a true equilibrium between the sexes. History abundantly records instances in the long ago when prophets and prophetesses held equal rank in general esteem and where only qualification was demanded as a passport to acknowledged eminence whether in Church or State.

Broadly speaking we may perhaps venture to present tentatively the following summarized propositions as suggesting some of the leading aspects of the religion of to-morrow :—

- (1) A conception of Deity as the Universal Parent, Father-Mother, definable in terms of limitation, but spiritually realizable in perpetually increasing measure as interior consciousness unfolds.
- (2) An ever-enlarging demonstration of human life as extending immeasurably beyond terrestrial boundaries and subject to continual advancement in all conceivable directions.
- (3) A growing appreciation of the illimitable extent of Law and Order, rendering possible the extension of hospitable welcome to all imaginable phases of psychic phenomena without drawing any arbitrary line, as of old, between natural and supernatural.
- (4) A resolute determination to find the good in all systems of thought and practice impartially, with the object in view of bringing the nations of the whole earth together in a spiritual and practical federation, to the end that warfare shall no more afflict our planet.
- (5) A deliberate cultivation of our superphysical faculties with a view to dignifying and purifying

existence Here and Now, and at the same time rendering a first-hand knowledge of life continuous increasingly available.

(6) The extension of glad welcome to modern seers and seeresses and a candid examination of living testimonies to spiritual experiences, thereby placing the grounds for acceptance of spiritual revelations on an experimental rather than on any historical or memorial basis.

(7) An optional and discriminative employment of religious rites and ceremonies whenever and wherever they are found helpful, but no attempt to force any ordinance or regard any ceremony as universally necessary to spiritual development.

(8) A definite systematic application of the highest ethical ideals attainable to the work of education in general and in particular. A greatly increased appeal to affection coupled with intelligence and a consequently vanishing degree of emphasis placed upon the time-worn appeal to fear.

(9) Perfect freedom granted to individuals to express their convictions and carry them into practice, conformably at all times with the equal rights and liberties of neighbours who may honestly entertain different views and desire some different expressions of religious sentiment.

(10) The establishment and voluntary maintenance of a diversified religious ministry recruited from the ranks of youths and maidens who give evidence of specific qualifications for such ministries. The complete restoration of a Healing Ministry and of a Prophetic Ministry, the credentials of which must be furnished by living proofs of blessings conferred and useful work accomplished regardless of perfunctory ordinations.

The above ten propositions are purely tentative and intended only to suggest much further thought along the broad lines indicated.

The religion of to-morrow must be a liberal spiritual religion combining the fullest individual liberty with due acknowledgment of a spiritual authority which proves its title to consideration not by any assumptions of power over human reason and conscience, but solely by demonstrated usefulness. All trees must and will be judged finally solely by the fruits they bear.

PRINTED BY WILLIAM BRENDON AND SON, LIMITED,
PLUMMOUTH, ENGLAND;